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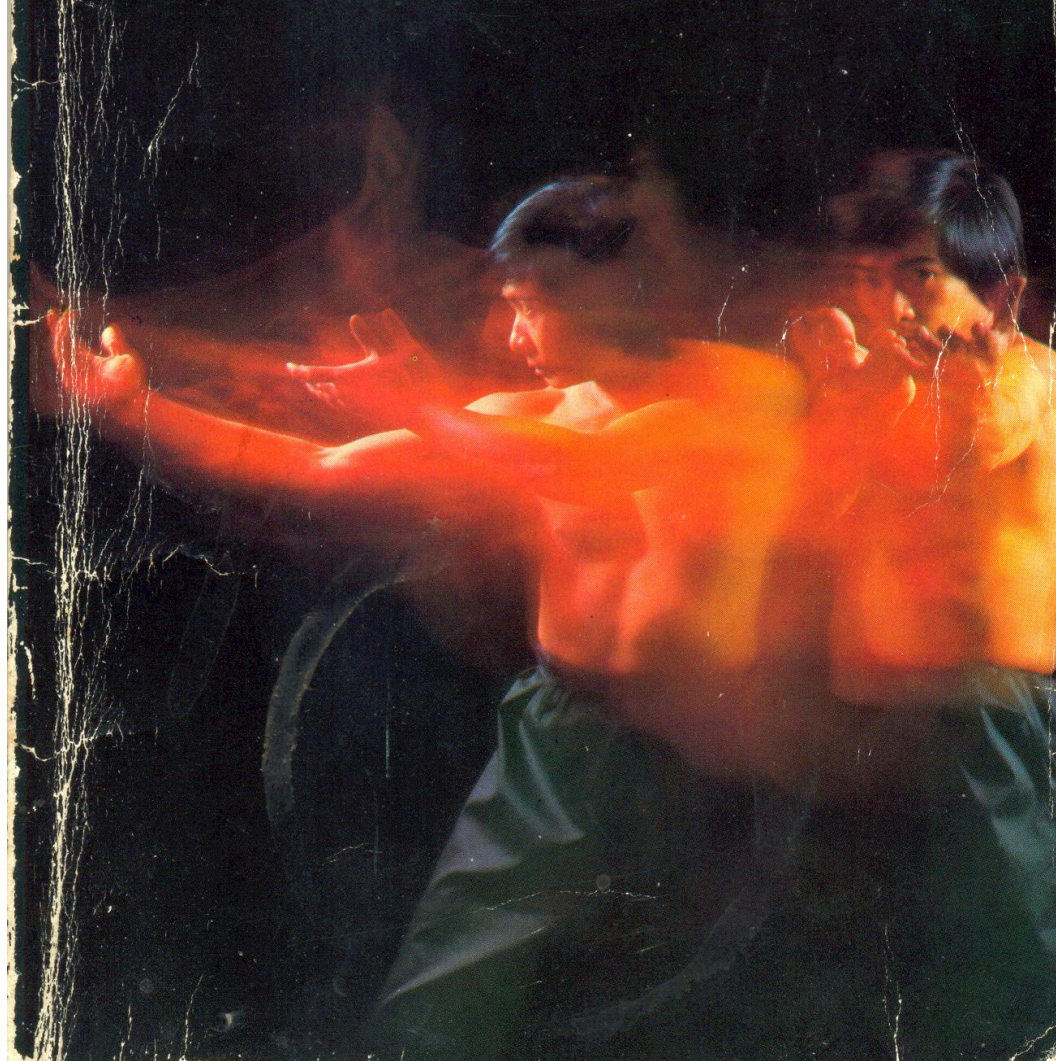
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# THE KUNG FU EXERCISE BOOK

MICHAEL MINICK

Health Secrets of Ancient China





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Highly advanced forms of therapeutic exercise, hitherto completely unknown in the Western world, have long been practised in China. But more than just a pattern of exercises, Kung Fu is an integral part of Chinese medicine today. The Chinese believe most sickness is the result of internal weakness: a weakness, they claim, that can be eliminated by exercises which strengthen all parts of the body-internal organs, nerves, joints, ligaments and blood vessels-not the muscles alone as do Western methods of exercise.

Michael Minick gives here a detailed description of the Kung Fu system. Each exercise is illustrated and an explanation is given of how it is beneficial to the body.





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**THE KUNG FU EXERCISE BOOK**  
**HEALTH SECRETS OF ANCIENT CHINA**  
**MICHAEL MINICK**

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## Chapter One

### THE SECRETS OF HEALTH AND EXERCISE IN CHINA

Some of the most advanced forms of therapeutic exercise ever developed by man have been practiced for years in mainland China, almost completely unbeknownst to the whole Western world.

It is fortunate for us that times are changing and that corners of the curtain of secrecy between us and China have been lifted. For the first time; we are becoming aware of a Chinese medical technique which has been developed over the last five thousand years.

Examination of this unheard-of system will provide the reader with a fascinating glimpse into a world of physical therapy that Western science has not yet begun to explore. Through a previously zealously guarded secret, thousands of Westerners will be able to enjoy a level of health, physical fitness, and emotional well-being formerly attained only by the Chinese.

The system I am going to describe is far more than just a pattern of exercises. It is an integral part of Chinese medicine. Traditional Chinese medicine's weapons against ill health are few in number, but they are extraordinarily effective. They include acupuncture, moxibustion (a form of therapy in which acupuncture points are gently heated instead of needled), remedial massage, herbal remedies, and, most basically, exercise. All Chinese medical students even today must take courses in therapeutic exercise throughout their studies-c-in marked contrast to Western medical students, who would not dream of such a thing.

The whole Chinese attitude toward the effect of exercises on the body differs radically from most Western ideas. While the goal of Western exercises is bigger and stronger muscles, the Chinese are mainly interested in stronger internal organs, nerves, joints, ligaments, and blood vessels. This is the basic difference between the two systems. Chinese medical thought attributes most illness to internal weakness, and believes that if weakness is eliminated through exercise there is no room for disease. Westerners, on the other hand, tend to see illness as the result of infectious bacteria or other outside agents, which they try to eliminate through the use of drugs. Although this is something of an oversimplification, it might be said that Orientals try to fine-tune the body, while Westerners attempt to modify the exterior environment.

However, in recent years Western medicine has come around to the Oriental point of view in certain instances. Western experimentation has shown that internal organs, when well exercised, enlarge (slightly) like skeletal muscles, and that these "stronger" organs are more immune to dysfunction or disease. Cardiac patients, for example, are now advised to exercise under careful supervision, in order to build up the heart muscle. Not only was this approach unheard of fifteen or twenty years ago, but most medical authorities would have considered it suicidal! Yet recent studies have proved that a careful program of exercise actually cures many people. The best known example of recovery in this area is the case of Deke Slayton, an early astronaut. Taken off flight status because of a heart problem, he was recently pronounced normal by space doctors





and returned to full training. His recovery was attributed to a daily exercise program aimed at strengthening his heart muscle.

The unique health exercises in this book are derived from the "Ancient Art Silk-Weaving Exercises," which have been a part of Chinese culture for over fifty centuries. They take their name from the movements made by weavers during the actual process of silk weaving; superficially these motions by weavers appear soft and fluid, but actually both weaver and silk are strong and firm. Developed by a Kung Fu master whose name is lost to antiquity, these exercises were initially performed by his students to promote better health, toughen muscles, stimulate internal organs, and ensure long life.

The Kung Fu master in ancient China was a warrior, and during the initial development of Kung Fu the art was little more than a form of self-defense and exercise. (Kung Fu later evolved into a complex system of medicine, philosophy, weapon development, literature, etc. See Chapter 4.) Novices who wished to master these fighting skills were required to practice the Ancient Art Exercises for months so their bodies would be able to withstand the more rigorous Kung Fu Forms.

Inevitably the extraordinary success of these remarkable exercises soon caught the attention of some Chinese doctors, who prescribed them to their patients, and it wasn't long before they became popular with the general population.

Over the last five thousand years, up to the present century, subsequent Kung Fu masters and medical men further refined and developed the early techniques. However, prior to the Communist takeover, traditional Chinese medicine had declined in prestige, and Western medicine was the rage. Within a year after taking power, the new leaders of China called a health conference of medical men of all persuasions. Old and new practitioners were ordered to work together, with particular emphasis on either proving or disproving the effectiveness of the ancient techniques. The results were startling: every area of traditional medicine was vindicated.

Acupuncture, which functions by stimulating internal organs through nerverlike pathways called meridians, gained new prestige as laboratory proof gave conclusive evidence of its startling efficacy. This in turn prompted more research which led to dramatic new advances like anesthesia acupuncture. Herbal remedies, which had fallen into disrepute among doctors, turned out to be highly effective in treatment of a host of disorders from coughs to snake bites. But the most spectacular results of all came from research into therapeutic exercises such as the Ancient Art Exercises and other Kung Fu variations.

Thousands of men and women who suffered from chronic ailments were treated exclusively through exercise and breathing techniques, and results showed a cure rate hovering around ninety percent! Researchers scientifically measured the internal organs of their patients both before and after treatment. In most cases they found enlarged and strengthened organs afterward. Control groups treated by more conventional methods failed to show a similar gain.

In a very exhaustive survey, the validity of exercising internal organs was conclusively proven to the satisfaction of all China.





These revolutionary scientific findings were almost totally ignored in the outside world. Reports were published in the late 1950s, but the scientific community ignored them-with the notable exception of the Soviet Union, which immediately instituted its own research. Today, nearly twenty years later, the United States and other Western countries are beginning to follow suit as laboratory testing proves the enormous importance of exercising internal organs.

The Ancient Art Silk-Weaving Exercises are designed to develop and stimulate every vital area of the body. Clinical studies on mainland China have proved them highly effective in dealing with disorders of the respiratory, digestive, circulatory, and nervous systems. The key to their success lies in the fact that each exercise deals with specific organs, nerves, and muscles, through a scientific combination of body movement and breath control.

This ancient use of breath and external exercises has been the center of extensive study at the prestigious Shanghai Sanatorium for many years. Thousands of carefully documented cases have positively determined the ability of the Ancient Art and other Kung Fu Breathing Exercises to cure a wide variety of disorders, including duodenal ulcers, depression, malignant vomiting, prolapse of the stomach, nervous exhaustion, sexual complications, and lack of appetite. This type of therapy has been dramatically successful in cases where conventional treatment has failed.

Superficially, the system is akin to Hatha Yoga, which uses postures and breathing techniques to achieve results. But Yoga puts the body in difficult positions and keeps it there, while the Ancient Art Exercises are based on movement and flow.

Scientific vindication of the old methods caused an upsurge of interest by the Chinese people in their own physical culture. Millions of men and women trooped to the parks to perform the exercises en masse, with the blessings and active encouragement of their new leaders. Historically the warrior class was the one to practice these exercises, so it was no surprise that they became quite popular with the military forces as well.

The results of the studies were not to be ignored by the health-conscious new regime in China. Recognizing that therapeutic exercises were not only enormously beneficial in treating severe health problems, but were effective as preventive measures, the government urged doctors to prescribe the exercise for all their patients. The government itself mounted massive exercise campaigns to help ensure the people's health and increase productivity. The campaigns soon proved successful. Men and women who performed the exercises not only got sick less often but felt and functioned much better.

Chinese doctors know that the body is an enormously complicated and delicate mechanism in many ways analogous to a fine automobile engine. The motor must be periodically tuned or poor mileage results because the fuel isn't being burned properly. Similarly, the cams, valves, and rods are carefully machined parts that demand fine adjustment. If they are not properly serviced they slip, grind down, and can literally blow the engine apart. The same holds true for every internal organ in the human body. The Chinese way of fine-tuning the body is the Ancient Art Exercises refined to their present level of perfection.



However, physical development is not the whole secret behind the incredible success of the Ancient Art Exercises. Though it may sound mystical to a nonpractitioner, almost all who know the art would agree that, simply stated, these exercises put one into contact with one's inner life force. A similar experience can be found with Hatha Yoga, whose word for the life force is Prana. The Chinese equivalent is Ch'i. Both terms translate as "breath," "air," or "energy," and both mean the vital force that stirs within each of us and makes us living, breathing, thinking creatures. The Western term for the phenomenon is "soul."

Regardless of semantic differences, few dispute the presence of this force within us. Anyone who does either the Ancient Art Exercises or Yoga for a while will become aware of it. With increased experience, he may be able to move this energy around his body. Advanced practitioners can often will it to flow into their hands or down their legs; they have control over each individual bodily organ just as the famous fakirs of India have when they stick pins through their bodies or stop their hearts. There is only one way such control can be gained-through contact with their life force, or Ch'i. We are not suggesting that the exercises presented here will make you capable of lying on a bed of nails-such feats take years of special work-but you can expect to be put in 'touch with your own internal energy.

The Ancient Art Silk-Weaving Exercises are the optimum therapeutic exercises, and yet they are surprisingly convenient to do.

First, they can be performed by, and were designed for, anyone regardless of age or physical condition. This is because they are effortless to perform. They won't raise a sweat, or even make you breathe heavily. In fact, after the exercise your breathing rate will have slowed slightly.

Secondly, they take only minutes to perform, which makes them ideal for today's busy men and women. We can all find ten idle minutes out of a day.

Thirdly, they can be performed almost anywhere.

All that is necessary is a place to stand erect, with enough room to move one step in any direction.

Fourthly, they are easy to learn and enjoyable to perform, which is not true of most exercises. For example, most exercises really can't be learned from a book, but these can. Many other Chinese exercises take years of practice and training to perform; these don't.

The best thing of all about these exercises is the unique feeling of well-being that you experience upon completing them. Your mind is calm, relaxed, and centered. You feel in tune with bodily actions and consequently with your environment.

Now that historical and cultural barriers between China and the Western world are finally breaking down and we are ready to examine views of medicine different from our own, it is important to point out that the Chinese have been as reluctant to part with knowledge as we have been to listen.





For a long time the Chinese had an understandable contempt for the Western imperialists who were plundering their country. They saw no reason why they should prolong the lives or alleviate the sufferings of this greedy lot. In any case, the Chinese are xenophobic and do not share cultural information readily.

Ten years ago it was all but impossible for a Caucasian to learn Kung Fu in the United States, not because there were no schools (there were scores of them), but because the schools were closed to all who were not Chinese. In recent years this feeling has somewhat lessened with the breakdown of strong family and cultural ties, and a few Kung Fu masters have opened their schools to the public. Most of the schools, however, still remain closed to outsiders.

In China, the change is greater. Solid industrial and technological achievements and a resurgence of national pride have made the Chinese more eager to demonstrate their cultural accomplishments to the rest of the world.

It would be stupid to look upon this or any other health system as being a miraculous cure-all. There are, of course, limitations to it. The Ancient Art Exercises have had no demonstrable effect on the results of poisoning or on diseases like cancer, multiple sclerosis, glaucoma, cerebral palsy. All the cures we have mentioned are for chronic ailments-diseases associated with nerves, emotional states, structural weaknesses. But in this area the results have indeed been spectacular.

If you have a chronic difficulty such as asthma, ulcers, or back problems, you can expect relief after several months of exercise. If you are prone to anxiety or just have trouble unwinding, these exercises are far cheaper than an analyst's couch. Or if you just want to get in shape and enjoy what the Eastern sages call the six conditions of health (see Chapter 2), the Ancient Art Exercises provide you with a unique opportunity.



## Chapter Two

### CHINESE MEDICINE'S ROUTE TO GOOD HEALTH~ AND WELL-BEING

Were a Chinese doctor to examine almost any reader of this book he would shake his head and gravely pronounce that reader to be far from healthy. The same reader might then go to a Western doctor and be thumped, stethoscoped, X-rayed, drained of blood, and have his various bodily orifices peered into. After which the doctor would most likely tell him he was fine, and by this he would mean that the patient was no better and no worse than anyone else the doctor sees. Clearly there are some very fundamental differences between East and West in general attitudes toward the human body and prevention of its diseases. This applies particularly to diagnosis.

The four traditional Chinese methods of diagnosis are looking, listening, questioning, and feeling the pulse. The first three are superficially similar to the methods used in Western medicine. However, they differ from Western methods in that they are only preliminary examinations used to back up the final diagnosis-which is determined solely by feeling the pulses:

In Chinese medicine, taking the pulse is not the simple counting of the heartbeat known in the West. It involves measuring a different pulse for each individual organ. The Chinese believe, and have proven to their entire satisfaction, that every organ in the body, and not just the heart, has its own pulse. The strength and quality of the pulse determines how perfectly (or imperfectly) the organ is functioning. According to A Summary of the Traditional Chinese Healing Art, by Dr. Ronald Chen, there are twenty eight grades of pulse which, together with such characteristics as strength and quality, reveal the exact nature of any ailment, and the organ that is malfunctioning. For example, the "overflowing pulse" is the pulse associated with stomach upset and intestinal disorder, while the "taut pulse" is produced by liver diseases. Chinese doctors take the pulse by placing three fingers on each radial artery of both forearms. They then use different degrees of pressure to get different responses, such as the overflowing and taut pulses just mentioned. Similarly, pulses are taken at arteries on the legs and the neck.

A highly developed sense of touch is required for this kind of diagnosis. In China, training to become a doctor starts when a child is still young, with the necessary knowledge often being passed on by a relative who is himself a doctor. The diagnostic training received by the student doctor is a basic part of a system of health that has been refined and found effective over many thousands of years of traditional Chinese medicine. Today there remains little doubt, even in the minds of Western doctors, as to their effectiveness. There is, after all, no reason why more than one method of diagnosis should not work. In fact, in a recent series of investigations carried out jointly by French and Chinese doctors, traditional Chinese methods were once again completely vindicated when, out of hundreds of cases where the French doctors diagnosed with Western techniques while the Chinese used their pulse method, the diagnoses coincided in a remarkable seventy-nine percent of the cases.

However, more sensitive diagnostic methods aren't the only reasons for making a Chinese doctor sigh over the shape you are in. His medical concept of the health of the human body allows him far more delicate perceptions toward the current, unbalanced state of all your bodily organs, finding major problems where his Western counterpart might have pronounced an all-clear. The





reason for this fundamental difference lies in the underlying medical philosophies. Western medicine sees the human body as a complete and self-regulatory system and believes that the average person has few flaws of any consequence. The Chinese are far more cautious in their estimate of the body's capabilities. Not only in medicine but deeply ingrained throughout their culture and literature is the belief that the body is a flawed organism that needs continual regulation to keep it on an even keel. Even in Chinese novels one is struck by the fact that every character has an internal weakness that brings about his eventual demise. Consequently, a pulse checkup performed by a Chinese doctor might turn up some minute malfunction of the spleen or gall bladder that neither the patient nor a Western doctor would notice.

Western medicine has always tended to treat symptoms instead of the bodily weakness that made the illness possible in the first place. The area of preventive medicine is widely neglected. Westerners have virtually no concrete, unified approach to keeping fit and healthy. Everyone has a different method, and many contradict each other, as can be seen in the prevalence of exercise fads that come and go.

Western medicine chooses to believe that everything in the body functions perfectly until an obvious malfunction appears. It ignores subtle disorders that the trained Chinese doctor would note and move to correct. In the same vein, Western science only recently acknowledged the fact that individual organs can be controlled apart from the autonomic nervous system. Current brain-wave research has conclusively demonstrated that the different types of brain waves can be regulated and selectively induced. The same applies to any internal organ. In fact, generations of yogis and other Easterners have been slowing their heartbeat and all but suspending their respiration.

### The Six Conditions of Health

To return to diagnosis: it is not necessary to go to a Chinese doctor to find out if all systems are functioning perfectly. You can get a good idea of what shape you are in simply by taking the following health test. Reformulated for Westerners by the respected Japanese doctor Sakurazawa Nyoiti (much of Japan's physical culture and medical practices originated in China), the test is based on six vital questions. A score of one hundred percent affirmative answers to all questions would indicate a mind and body in absolutely perfect tune. But this absolute state, like perfect grace, is something to aim for rather than expect to achieve. Nyoiti contends that anyone who can honestly score forty percent on these questions is in relatively good health by our standards, even though functioning nowhere near their ability. The first three criteria are physical guideposts, and are worth ten points apiece. The fourth and fifth are psychological, and you may award yourself twenty points for each. The sixth, also psychological, is worth thirty points. Honestly, now, where do you score?

1. Are you free from fatigue? Fatigue is a warning from the body that something is not functioning properly or is fighting disease. Healthy people never feel tired. They find working a joy, difficult situations a challenge, and they welcome problems as fresh adventures for their ingenuity to overcome. Always eager to see things through, they rarely experience boredom, which is just another name for fatigue. Consequently, they bring enormous energy and a zest for life even to the most trivial difficulty.



2. Do you sleep soundly? A man or woman with the aforementioned energy sleeps soundly and deeply, and wakes completely refreshed after six hours' sleep. Moreover, such a person falls asleep minutes after his head hits the pillow, regardless of place or circumstances. Talking in one's sleep is an unfavorable sign, as are violent, disturbing dreams. Finally, one should be able to awaken at a preset time by simply visualizing the hour to get up immediately before going to sleep. The inability to meet these fundamental conditions indicates a basic health problem that needs attention.

3. Is your appetite good? A person should be able to enjoy even the simplest foods with relish. Everything, as long as it has been wholesomely prepared, should taste good and leave one satisfied. At the same time, healthy people know how to regulate their appetite and never overindulge. Naturally, they are not overweight, nor does their weight fluctuate more than a few pounds with the changing of the seasons. A healthy sexual appetite is also a vital sign of good health and internal harmony. A man or woman with weak sexual desires, or one who has difficulty receiving satisfaction, runs against the grain of nature.

4. Are you good-humored? To lose one's patience quickly, to be cruel or sarcastic, to be bereft of good cheer toward one's fellow man, to harbor a grudge, to lack enthusiasm, is to be out of touch with humanity. The healthy person retains a sense of wonder and admiration for the working of the world around him. He has achieved a physical and mental balance which enables him to meet the most trying situation pleasantly and gracefully. Such a person is even kind in his criticism of others, and attempts to learn from his enemies as well as his friends.

5. Is your memory good? Memory is the basic foundation on which we construct our daily lives. A failing memory is a sign of declining physical health and emotional instability. Conversely, the more encompassing one's memory is, the sounder the health. Memory supplies us daily with purpose and direction. Without it man is like a phonograph needle caught in a groove. Without direction, all our physical and mental efforts are wasted and deterioration sets in. Conversely, the more one remembers, the healthier one is. Contrary to popular belief, the ability to remember should grow rather than decline with age.

6. Are you precise in thought and action? A person's very survival depends on his ability to make sound judgments quickly and to put them into action with dispatch. If you are out on the street and a car is coming, or someone has thrown something at you, your response should be automatic, without a second's hesitation. The inability to respond to the environment instinctively is a sure indication that it is only a matter of time before the environment will no longer have to respond to you! Furthermore, it is precision in thought, together with memory, that enables man to order the details of his existence and establish harmony with his surroundings.

These, then, are the age-old criteria that Oriental doctors have been applying to their patients for thou sands of years. And visitors to China are uniformly impressed by the unity, high spirits, energy, and enthusiasm of the Chinese. This is true despite the fact that compared to Westerners they have a lower standard of living, less food, less clothing, entertainment, and all the other amenities of life. Two things may explain the difference between the mass of people in the East and in the West that so vividly impressed our foreign correspondents: pride in the new regime



and an extensive medical program. The crux of the modern Chinese medical program is undoubtedly preventive medicine, and the lion's share of credit for the success of the program must go to the Ancient Art Exercises. Since the Communists instituted nationwide exercises there has been a remarkable increase in morale and worker efficiency. It was one edict that met with overwhelming enthusiasm from the masses.





## THE BENEFITS OF CHINESE MEDICINE

The Ancient Art Exercises are not the only weapon in the Chinese arsenal against disease. The one we hear about most today is acupuncture, yet acupuncture is not used at all in many cases, and when it is called upon it is frequently as a last resort! In the scale of medical aids it is a particularly strong stimulus. Equally important remedies like herbal treatment, moxibustion, remedial massage, respiratory therapy, and therapeutic exercises are gentler forms of treatment which are usually tried first.

Almost all forms of Chinese medical treatment have common roots and have evolved out of at least five thousand years of the past, according to oral legend and history. Now recent excavations have brought to light the first written evidence of the longevity of Chinese medicine: bones, some 3,500 years old, which have the names of diseases and herbal remedies inscribed on them. The first written evidence of acupuncture appears in the commentary entitled Iso Chuan, which was compiled between the fifth and third centuries B.C. Nonetheless, archaeological excavations have uncovered stone acupuncture needles which place this art well into the Chinese Stone Age. Diagnosis by pulse is believed to be over 2,500 years old, making it a rather recent development in Chinese history!

Chinese medicine has repeatedly made major advances hundreds and often thousands of years before Western medicine. The circulation of blood was a well-known fact in China a full 1,500 years before the English physician William Harvey demonstrated it to his contemporaries in Europe. Skulls uncovered during excavations reveal that cranium operations were common in China thousands of years ago. Anesthesia techniques were recorded as early as the second century B.C., and were most likely common at an even earlier date. At the beginning of the seventh century A.O., the first medical training school was established by imperial decree. This was over two hundred years before the founding of the famous school in Salerno. Medical encyclopedias appeared with regularity after the invention of printing plate printing in the eighteenth century, and each one had more knowledge than the one that preceded it. Most amazing of all was the Chinese discovery and use of a primitive form of vaccination against smallpox several thousand years before Edward Jenner, the Western discoverer of the method, came on the scene.

These are only some of the highlights of the evolution of Chinese medicine. The Chinese have consistently displayed an ability to see deeper into health problems than any other civilization in the same or later eras. Consequently, the West still has much to learn from them. Exercise is one area, and one that can be easily learned by everyone. Another area, one which requires the attention of our medical specialists, deals with the meridian theory that is the basis of acupuncture, moxibustion, and remedial massage.

Discovered accidentally about five thousand years ago, the theory suggests that there are twelve major and two minor nerve like pathways called meridians running through the body. These pathways emerge at 722 points all over the body. If they are needed, heated, or rubbed, they have the capacity to stimulate widely separated parts of the body.



The Chinese are not the only people to have discovered this phenomenon. In 1893 a British neurologist, Sir Henry Head, discovered what were to become known as "Head's zones" in western medical textbooks. These zones correspond to the meridian system. Earlier still, in 1834, the Swedish hygienist Pehr Henrik Ling had observed the same phenomena, and at about that same time two American brothers, Ors. W. and D. Griffin, published reports on similar observations. Not surprisingly, these Western pioneers were ignored or jeered at and their studies treated as some sort of medical curiosity for the next hundred and fifty years.

Unhindered by skepticism, the Chinese continued to explore and develop the incredible potential of the meridian theory. They carried out extensive experimentation on themselves and on lower mammals which have almost identical meridian structure and found that almost every area of the body could be stimulated or narcotized. For instance, if the doctor felt that the patient's liver was not producing enough bile, a point could be rubbed, heated, or needled (depending on the degree of stimulation necessary) and the organ would respond. The strongest means of stimulation was needling, which became known as acupuncture. Moxibustion, or heating the area, produces a somewhat more moderate response. While massage is the gentlest and most widely used method of correcting minor, chronic problems, all these methods are at last beginning to receive consideration in the West by experts and laymen alike.

The emergence and popular acceptance of the meridian theory and acupuncture in turn lends credence to the efficacy of the Ancient Art Exercises. First, it reaffirms the basic concept that internal organs can be made to function better through external stimulation. Second, it demonstrates the comprehensive knowledge that the Chinese have about the human body and about natural organic ways of making it function well. Third, knowledge gained from meridian research has been incorporated into therapeutic exercise. Through movements and breath control the ancient masters found ways of stimulating the meridian system as a means of preventive medicine, and in many cases actually effecting cures.

Another area of traditional Chinese medical wisdom is the use of herbal remedies. These are not related to the meridian theory, but they are a valuable adjunct to the other traditional methods of treatment and are remarkably effective in their own right. Just how effective they are has been recently demonstrated by the Communist government's extensive testing of these cures.

In 1950, one year after the Communist takeover, the first National Hygiene Conference decided that the value of traditional medicine should be explored scientifically. As a result, medical workers collected and tested thousands of herbal remedies, many of which were treasured "family traditions" handed down from father to son.

The results of these tests often confirmed folk wisdom. For instance, ma huang, or Chinese horsetail, known to the Chinese since time immemorial and used in treating asthma, turned out to be a major source of natural ephedrine, a current Western remedy for asthmatic ailments. Chung uiei-ize, or Siberian motherwort, long a favorite remedy for gynecological diseases and valued for its tranquilizing properties, turned out to be indeed very effective. Pien hsu, or prostrate knotweed, contained salicylic acid, which today is used in the treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis. By far the most generally useful and fascinating herb is [en-shen, or ginseng.



Ginseng possesses such enormous value that it is systematically cultivated and widely consumed in China. It is the most widely used and prescribed herb, and no Chinese health program (including this one) would be complete without it. Chinese doctors and Kung Fu masters alike urge their charges to consume it regularly as a restorative and to maintain internal balance. Its curative powers, which are numerous and legendary, are extensively dealt with in a later chapter. Ginseng is almost invariably taken to speed and ameliorate the effects of the Ancient Art Exercises, and is an indispensable part of the daily regimen.

#### Chapter four THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE EXERCISE

##### The Kung fu Man and Chinese Society

The Ancient Art Exercises are part of an exercise system that stretches back almost out of sight into the roots of Chinese history, culture, and temperament.

Kung Fu warriors first worked out the Ancient Art Exercises to strengthen their bodies for selfdefense.

Their fame as warriors of extraordinary strength and stamina gradually made their life style and their exercise program subjects of wide interest. Ordinary men and women began to see the value of the exercises for health alone, and adopted them for their own use. So a Kung Fu master would painstakingly construct a new exercise, word would get out, and eventually the exercise would become a part of popular usage. In fact practically every form of Chinese exercise developed in the past five thousand years was the invention of the Kung Fu men and was originally intended as a means of self-defense.

In China there is no such thing as exercising just to build muscles. There isn't even a word for the equivalent of exercise or calisthenics in the Chinese language. The closest it is possible to come is Kung Fu -Wu Su which is the name for the whole system of developing the body for strength and self protection, as well as an entire philosophical system.

In China's violent feudal past not being able to defend yourself meant living a short life. Just having a well-developed body would not help when you were being chased by a bloodthirsty warlord, but a training by a series of exercises that taught self-defense as well as increasing health and strength was very useful. The term Kung Fu-Wu Su translated into English demonstrates the dual character of the art exactly, for Kung Fu means discipline (physical and mental), while Wu Su is the martial application of that discipline. Those who simply want their bodies in better shape are concerned with Kung Fu, those wanting to learn to fight study Wu Su, but they are all known as Kung Fu men.

The Kung Fu man is the folk hero of traditional Chinese culture. He was a cross between a knight in armor and a gunslinger in the Wild West. Robin Hood style, he took from the rich and protected the poor. He was required (and still is) to take an oath to punish evildoers and aid the





weak and downtrodden. He was trained to be as adept with medicine as in self-defense. Among other things he was constantly having to treat the wounds and bruises from practice sparring sessions or actual combat. So the Kung Fu man's medical education placed particular emphasis on ointments, baths, and herbs that toughened the body.

Medicine and chemistry are represented by the same Chinese ideogram and the Kung Fu man learned about alchemy too. Chemicals were used for attacks and for cures. In fact, the Kung Fu men were probably the first to use chemical warfare against their enemies. They developed smoke screens and powders to blind opponents or knock them unconscious.

The men of Kung Fu were highly trained in martial arts, but they were also expected to be men of letters and refined in every way. They had to be well versed in Taoist thought and able to write adequate verse and play at least one musical instrument passably. Besides developing the incredible Chinese exercise forms, the Kung Fu warriors were responsible for numerous other cultural innovations-in religion, philosophy, chemistry, and technology. For thousands of years they were one of the most potent forces in Chinese daily life and thought. This power and influence did not begin to wane until the rise of the Chinese middle class, which shifted the balance of wealth from the rural warlords to the merchants in the cities.

Today the Kung Fu warrior is the prime romantic hero figure in Chinese media everywhere outside China, especially in the books and movies that come flooding out of Hong Kong. Over half of the movies made by the big production houses are period pieces that pit a heroic, handsome Kung Fu man or woman against a desperate band of thugs. Chinese paperback books on newsstands in all the Chinatowns around the world offer predominantly Kung Fu adventure stories.

Roughly speaking, the Chinese interest in Kung Fu adventures is analogous to the popular American fascination with gunslingers and the Wild West. If the grain of violence runs deeper in the Chinese stories, it is because of the long-time existence of warring feudal states, which made violence and the need for protection an unpleasant fact of life. The Chinese word that we translate as "warlord," tuchun, indicates a landed gentry of military inclination, a class of men produced by a lawless, turbulent feudal time when few people lived to die of old age. In medieval Europe, the feudal society often resorted to arms to settle disputes, and barons would employ armored knights to defend their peasants and property. It was the same in China, the only difference being that the feudal stage of history lasted longer. During that time there was an alternation of periods of stability under a strong central ruler and periods of anarchy and continual warring between neighboring provinces ruled by powerful warlords.

It is easy to see why the Kung Fu man held such an honored position in Chinese society. He kept the neighboring soldiers from pillaging the peasants' fields and looting their homes, and he protected the weak from thugs who took advantage of the lawless situation.

## The History of Kung Fu



Kung Fu -Wu Su is the oldest form of martial-arts exercise in the world. It evolved first as a form of martial art, from which health exercises and medical advances were eventual spin-offs. Early records indicate that the great Yellow Emperor (Huang Ti) was the first to make use of Kung Fu, during the battle in 2674 B.c., though some Kung Fu masters today claim that the beginnings of the exercises in this book actually predate this by several hundred years. From that distant time, the exercises have gradually been modified to their present form, with the pattern of evolution broken at a few momentous points.

Two occurrences were to have enormous influence on Kung Fu. The first was around 600 B.c. when Lao-tzu allegedly wrote the Tao-te Ching, the book that sets forth the wisdom of Taoism. Essentially a philosophic system rather than a religious one, Taoism is a way of achieving higher states of consciousness by following the belief that nature guides all things. Kung Fu and Taoism grew along parallel lines. The philosophy of the Kung Fu warriors had its roots in Taoism. Both evolved into systems of practices which encompassed breathing techniques, meditation techniques, health techniques, medical techniques, and alchemy. The Taoist monks became very adept in all forms of combat, both with and without swords. At the same time, Kung Fu men took to heart Taoist philosophy and practices. Although there is no way to know for sure, it is most likely at this point that the Kung Fu code of protecting the weak and punishing evildoers came into being.

The next important date in the history of Kung Fu occurred about a thousand years later. Sometime between A.D. 506 and 556 the Buddhist monk Ta Mo arrived from India. Ta Mo is credited with bringing Zen Buddhism to China from India. His exact origins are obscure, but paintings portray him as Chinese. In all likelihood he was both a man of God and a Kung Fu man who made a religious pilgrimage to India. When he returned with his new teachings, he set up shop in the Shaolin Temple in Northern China. From there Zen Buddhism spread throughout China, and eventually to Japan.

Ta Mo is remembered for his effect not only on the minds and souls of millions of Oriental people, but on their bodies as well. The great teacher noticed that his frail novices frequently fell asleep during his lectures. Consequently, he taught them eighteen "hands" of exercises, believing that a strong body not only would make them more alert, but would also bring them in closer contact with their souls, much in the way that Hatha Yoga is meant to. But Ta Mo didn't rely on Indian techniques; instead he utilized, modified, and updated Kung Fu exercises that had been commonly used by the Kung Fu masters for thousands of years. The response by his students was overwhelmingly enthusiastic, so Ta Mo instituted further study of Kung Fu as part of their daily regimen. In a matter of years the Shaolin Temple became famous for its devotion and advancement of Kung Fu as well as for its new Zen doctrine. Such was its importance that the top lay specialist in Kung Fu came to the temple to work.

Ta Mo's work marks the first codification and scientific study of Kung Fu. Before this point nothing had been written or organized. Advanced techniques were jealously guarded, and handed down from master to disciple. Ta Mo's exercises, known as Eighteen Monk Boxing, were initiated solely for health, but they soon encompassed Kung Fu in general.

After Ta Mo's death, his disciples dispersed and the art was nearly lost. Several hundred years



later it was revived by a wealthy young man named Yen, who became a priest and took the name Chueh Yuan. His interest in exercise and martial arts led him to revise Ta Mo's system into seventy-two styles. Within scant years his updated and specific martial orientation made the Shaolin art the most formidable in China. But Chueh Yuan was still not satisfied. He toured the mainland looking for other masters to work with, until one day he came upon a sixty-yearold peddler who was being manhandled by a cruel bully. As Chueh Yuan watched, the brute lashed out at the old peddler with a savage kick, but the old man merely touched his foot with two fingers and the bully fell unconscious. Impressed, Chueh Yuan immediately introduced himself to the peddler. The peddler explained that he did not have any great knowledge of the martial arts, but introduced him to Pai Yu-feng, the local master of the area. Pai, at fifty, was a kindly spiritual man, and Chueh Yuan succeeded in persuading him to return to the Shaolin Temple, where they consolidated Ta Mo's eighteen and Chueh Yuan's seventytwo movements into 170 actions that became the basis of the external school of Shaolin martial arts and exercises.

Popular legend has it that graduation from the Shaolin monastery was no simple feat, and unless the student passed three difficult tests he could not leave the temple. Consequently, many students remained for ten or fifteen years!

The first test consisted of a rigorous oral examination on the theory and the history of the art. The second was actual combat with a number of the better-trained monks. If the student acquitted himself favorably, he was permitted to take the final test-a grueling life-or-death voyage through a specially designed sealed labyrinth whose only exit was the front gate of the temple. The labyrinth consisted of 108 mechanized dummies equipped with wooden fists, razor-sharp spears and knives, and a wide assortment of esoteric Chinese weaponry. As the student traveled the length of the labyrinth, the boards he walked on triggered the dummies. The dummies were programmed in a random fashion, so that the student never knew if he would be attacked by one, three, five, or none at all. If the student managed to work his way to the gate, there was one culminating test: the exit was blocked by a five-hundred-pound smoldering urn. To gain his freedom, the student would have to wrap his arms around the urn and lift it out of the way. In the process, the red-hot urn would brand his forearms with two symbols-a dragon on his right arm and a tiger on his left. This marked him as a graduate of the Shaolin temple, and forever after he was treated with the utmost honor and respect wherever he went.

### The Subsequent Development of Kung Fu

With the appearance of Ta Mo and the subsequent formation of the Shaolin School, it was only natural that offshoots and eventually different methods would evolve. Essentially two different approaches came to dominate Kung Fu-the Hard or External School, and the Soft or Internal School. But one should not be misled by these adjectives into thinking that they are totally opposite approaches. Actually the soft techniques employ a bit of hardness, and vice versa. Essentially, though, the Hard School is characterized by rhythm, leaps, kicks, speed, and power. The Soft School, which generally evolved close to eight hundred years later, is characterized by slow graceful movements that blend imperceptibly one into the other, mental control rather than physical prowess, resilience to counteract power. The Hard School can be likened to brisk calisthenic-like movement, while the Soft is a more elegant ballet-like motion.





Curiously enough, Ta Mo's original eighteen exercises were of the Soft School. What makes this odd is that from them developed the Hard School, which completely dominated Kung Fu until Tai Chi Chuan

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and its sister arts were developed five hundred years later. This is not to say that Ta Mo's exercises fell into disuse. Every novice, regardless of school, was expected to learn them, if only to restore his body to good health.

Meanwhile, the External (Hard) School was in its heyday. It is estimated that some 360 styles of exercise/self-defense were created, each a variation on the basic Shaolin approach. Some of the styles are:

**Eagle Claw System.** This unique martial art takes its name from the clawlike manner in which a practitioner frequently holds his hands. It is further characterized by magnificent high leaps, kicks, and other soaring movements. The founder of the system is reputed to be the great general and patriot Yueh Fei, who lived from A.D. 1103 to 1141. The movements are complex, graceful, and difficult to perform; they are not for the beginner.

**Drunken Style.** No one knows just when or why this style originated, but it seems to have first taken hold in southern China. Not surprisingly, considering the title, the movements are patterned after the behavior of someone who has imbibed too much. To the uninformed observer, Drunken Style in action appears random in movement, with no apparent pattern visible. But in fact the practitioner is in total control. Modern-day masters like to demonstrate their art by lunging forward, falling down, kicking out, springing up—all while the practitioner is holding a cup of water in his hand without spilling a drop!

**Northern-Style Praying Mantis.** According to legend, Wong Long, the originator of the school, devised this system from observing a praying mantis fight with a grasshopper. He was so impressed by the skill of the mantis that he took it home with him and studied its movements for hours by feeding it other insects. From this he developed an exercise form in which the final position resembles the two front feelers of a praying mantis. This style relies heavily on swift footwork and is meant to develop strength. It is widely practiced by Chinese all over the world.

**Wah K'un.** This is usually practiced by two men who know all the movements by heart so that they are in perfect coordination with each other. It is a highly stylized form for which the participants must be in excellent physical condition. It is characterized by long strides, especially high kicking, and graceful leaps. The master of this form in Red China today is Choy Lung Wun.

The Soft or Internal School, which came into being somewhere after A.D. 1000, never developed the huge diversity of styles that the Hard School did. There are only three basic styles to the Soft School, and they do not have a common founder. Only the most indirect credit can be given to Ta Mo, due to the soft nature of his exercises. But they are all bound together by the same Taoist philosophy, slow graceful movement, and an emphasis on developing the mysterious Ch'i power within the body as a means of protection. They are perhaps the most beautiful of all Chinese



exercises to watch, and definitely the most difficult to master. It takes years of study to gain even the most basic proficiency. True masters of this art do not even have to perform them physically for a salutary effect, but instead put themselves into a meditation state where they act them out in their mind!

The most popular of the three styles is Tai Chi Chuan, which translates as "Grand Ultimate Fist." In other words, Tai Chi, as it is known by its students, was designed to be the final word in exercise/martial arts. As previously pointed out, every Chinese exercise form, with the partial exception of Ta Mo's health exercises, was devoted to self-defense which was necessary in turbulent warlord-ridden Chinese society. Tai Chi is no exception, and is thought of as a type of shadow boxing among the Chinese themselves.

There are four types of Tai Chi being practiced today: Yang, Wu, Ho, and Sun. The most popular type is Wu, which leans toward "harmonious self development." The basic form is enormously complex, some 108 movements long, and takes between twenty five and thirty minutes to perform by someone who knows what he is doing. All movements are performed slowly without any exertion, and always in a curved or circular manner. The movements blend imperceptibly into one another like a stream flowing into a greater river-without beginning, without end.

Pa Kua Chuan, or, more simply, Pa Kua, a sister art of Tai Chi, is a fairly recent development. A product of the nineteenth century, it relies on a system of intricate footwork and is performed in a somewhat swifter manner than Tai Chi. Its swift movements move the practitioner in eight directions, based on the eight ways of the Taoist philosophy.

Shin Yi Ch'uan, the last of the trio, is only twelve movements long. This seems as if it would be the easiest of the lot, but just the opposite is the case. It is probably the most demanding of all, and considering the complexity of Tai Chi it is small wonder that it doesn't have many adherents.

Where do the Ancient Art Exercises fit in the maze of Kung Fu exercises? Right back at the beginning. They were among the first devised, and among the few exercises that were developed primarily for health. Anyone who was to go to a Kung Fu master for instruction would have to practice these movements for months before being allowed to go on to other exercise forms. The reason for this is twofold.

First, anyone who hasn't been doing the Ancient Art Exercises is not in good enough shape to learn the more intricate exercises. Second, these are the simplest, easiest-to-learn movements, from which the more difficult forms of Chinese exercise have evolved. In order to learn how to run, it is first necessary to learn how to walk. Hence, anyone who is interested in learning about Chinese exercise must start with the simpler movements. This book has been written on the Ancient Art Exercises not only because of their health-giving aspects, but because they are the foundation on which more advanced forms are built. Also they are simple to perform, and lend themselves to easy pictorial representation.

## Chapter five



## WHY AMERICA NEEDS KUNG FU

### The State of Health in America

The United States of America has just about the worst health record of any industrialized nation in the world. Though we are the richest, most productive country there is, when it comes to life span there are seventeen countries whose people live longer than we do, while we rank a gloomy sixteenth for our national health.

These amazing and depressing statistics show that something is very wrong with the way we live. Nor is this the entire story. Every year our scientists, under the aegis of mammoth drug companies, produce new drugs, yet every winter over half the population comes down with colds and respiratory illnesses for which we cannot find a remedy. Our dependence on drugs is depressingly clear when one considers statistics which indicate that the average American spends about three hundred dollars a year on medication while the breadwinner in most underdeveloped countries brings home less than that amount in an entire year.

Despite our interest in health and medicine, we are in bad physical shape compared with other nations. The reason for this is not diet; the Russians don't eat as well as we do, but they live longer. Nor is it pollution, because these are long-range statistics and pollution is a relatively recent development. This leaves life style, and there is one thing that repeatedly crops up when we compare life styles: exercise.

Exercise is not built into our cultural pattern. We don't walk to the store, we drive, even if it is around the corner. We are great lovers of "spectator" sports and watch them by the hour on TV. Americans don't have adventure, they observe it on a little silver screen. If an activity is at all strenuous, someone will invent a little gadget to do it electrically. When President Kennedy initiated his physical-fitness program, his researchers brought back the alarming news that most men, women, and children were incapable of performing even the simplest of exercises satisfactorily.

Medical science tells us that muscles and organs that are not used atrophy. Just ask anyone who has had one of his limbs in a cast for a few months. He will tell you that it took considerable time before the limb returned to normal strength. Lack of exercise places your entire body in an invisible cast, but it is an insidious sort of cast, for the deterioration is not as dramatic as if it were made of plaster. The constriction is just as real nonetheless-and it is even more harmful.

The atrophy and breakdown that come from not using the body can be mental as well as physical. As Chinese medicine knows so well, the well-being of the mind. and the body are inseparable. Consider the

following stories of two people whose problems were solved by exercise.

### Some Personal Stories



Huang-fu Mi's involvement with Kung Fu came relatively late in life-almost too late, in fact. At the age of fifty-nine Huang was suffering from acute heart problems. At that time he lived on mainland China in the province of Hunan and was being treated by a doctor there. The doctor put him on a restrictive diet; had him work less, and suggested he take up the life-prolonging exercises a famous Kung Fu master was teaching nearby. At first Huang laughed. "Take up Kung Fu at my age?" he said. "Ha! I hire Kung Fu men as my bodyguards."

The doctor explained that unless he strengthened his internal organs he would soon have no body to guard. Reluctantly, for he was a proud man, Huang went to see the master. He was immediately impressed by the man's humility and gentle manner. He remembers that first meeting clearly:

I was led into a small room with only the simplest of furnishings. In the far corner was this little old man. This cannot be the master, I thought, there's nothing to him.' even a child could knock him down. Then he beckoned me to come close. I was about ten feet away from him when I first felt an incredible sensation. It was a feeling of deep peace and an underlying sense of enormous energy and power. I almost stopped in my tracks, but something pulled me on. I bowed and sat down in front of him and for the first time looked into those ancient eyes. I felt that I was in the presence of a being who was thousands of years old, a man of ancient wisdom who understood the workings of the laws of nature. The effect on me was instantaneous: my doubts vanished and a feeling of total serenity swept through my body.

"He proceeded to diagnose my ailment, though he never touched my body with his hands or asked me any questions. Instead, he read my aura. [Note: all mystics, regardless of religion, claim that the energy field that surrounds the human body can be seen, and that specific colors indicate emotional and physical states—e.g., "he was green with envy." He spotted my heart problem right away, then went on to notice a liver and kidney weakness my doctor had never picked up. He put me on an intensive therapy program utilizing the Silk-Weaving Exercises, massage, respiratory exercises, and herbs.

"In a month's time my old energy and zest for living had returned. I then wanted to go off the restrictive diet, but the master would not hear of it. He told me that I had abused my body for years and that it would take quite some time for it to regenerate completely. What I was feeling now, he added, was the body beginning to repair itself, and real improvement would come only later. For an entire year I stuck to this regimen, and the improvement was truly dramatic. I had the energy of a man half my age, the strength of a bull, and the serenity of a Buddha. At the end of the year the master suggested that I begin to take up the martial forms of Kung Fu. Before I did this I revisited my doctor. After a thorough examination he could find no sign of the prior illness and announced that I was one of the soundest physical specimens he had seen in weeks. . . ."

When the Communists came to power a few years later Huang and his master left China. They feared that the new order would frown on the traditional arts (which, briefly, it did). First they went to Taiwan

and then they came to America, where they set up a Kung Fu class. Ten years later the master passed away, at the age of ninety-four, but Huang and the other disciples have continued and expanded the school; it admitted Caucasian students for the first time six years ago.





Today, aged eighty-six, Huang is a miracle to watch. He bounces around the class, helping students, always with a smile and a word of encouragement. His good spirits and obvious good health are infectious and encourage the students to work harder all the time. He sleeps between three and four hours a night, and claims that he is never sick or even has a cold. "With God's will," he laughs, "I'll live as long as the master!"

Linda Fahey's involvement with the Ancient Art Exercises is an equally fascinating story. Linda had been sickly from birth, a premature child that the doctors didn't think would survive. Even after she made it through the crucial first months, she was not a healthy baby. She grew slowly and suffered repeatedly from lung congestion. Common childhood diseases hit her heavily and she was frequently hospitalized for complications. At the age of ten she contracted tuberculosis, and she emerged from the sanitarium three years later a frail, exhausted creature.

It seems incredible that a girl in such poor health would get involved in Chinese exercises, but it did happen. Linda explains it best in her own words:

"I guess all the credit should go to Arleen, my roommate. She's the active one. She was having all sorts of hassles with men on the street, and one day she just got fed up and decided that she was going to learn how to defend herself. She enrolled in a Kung Fu course, but before they would teach her any martial arts the master insisted that she prepare her body with the Ancient Art Exercises. After about a month on the exercises she noticed such a remarkable change in herself that she began urging me to do them. I was skeptical at first, but with each passing week the improvement in her already fine health, her extra energy, and her better spirits convinced me to give it a try.

"It was really difficult for me at first, I seemed to get weaker than I've ever been. The instructor told me to hang on, that the first few weeks were always difficult. So I kept it up and began to notice some changes. They were little things at first. I didn't get so tired when I walked up a few flights of stairs, and carrying the groceries back from the store was no longer such an ordeal as it once was. After the first two months I could feel my body beginning to undergo more profound changes. My lungs at last felt stronger. I began to sleep better and wake up earlier. Soon I was functioning on six hours of sleep instead of eight. My appetite, never anything to brag about, improved to the point where I put on some sorely needed weight. Moreover, the texture of my skin changed! It became firmer, tighter, and had a healthy pink tone instead of my sallow, gray complexion.

"But the change that surprised me most was the emotional one. For years my family had controlled my life and made all my decisions for me because I was so weak. One day we had a showdown! Now, in such situations I tended to be emotional and go to pieces. Not this time. I was calm and forceful throughout and managed to settle once and for all a number of things that had been hanging between us for years!"

That was just the start of Linda's transformation. She continued to pursue her studies in Kung Fu and went on to learn the martial arts. Within a year she was throwing 230-pound men around! And this was the girl who got dizzy going upstairs. Liberated by her new health and new body, she began to take up activities that she could not have dreamed of years before. She learned rock climbing, cross-country skiing, and scuba diving, and for her next vacation she is planning an extended canoe trip through the Fulton Chain Lakes in rugged upstate New York.



These success stories are pleasant to read, but there are not yet enough of them. This is largely because American cultural conditioning makes us neglect our bodies. Correcting this neglect is the reason for writing this book. It is a formidable task for a variety of reasons. First, offering an exercise program from a foreign country always generates a certain amount of skepticism, and most of the proof for it is unavailable. Second, American culture doesn't have a large enough segment of vocal physical-fitness devotees to make a case for any sort of exercise. Third, while Western medicine acknowledges the efficacy of exercise in prolonging life, it is of great significance that there is no agreement within medical ranks as to the type, duration, or frequency of such exercise. This confusion condemns the American public to be the willing guinea pigs of each new exercise fad and to be the victims of an enormous amount of misinformation. A quick rundown of these popular exercise fads will point out the more glaring inconsistencies, errors, and outright quackery. Compared with the patiently evolved, scientifically tested Chinese techniques, virtually every popular Western fitness program is found sorely lacking.

## ISOMETRICS

Isometrics, also known as "dynamic tension," has been known and seriously studied since the 1920s. The exercises first roused interest when physical therapists thought they helped maintain the strength of patients whose limbs were encased in casts. They reached a high point when Charles Atlas acclaimed dynamic tension as a sure-fire way of building a man's body. More recently a number of books have focused attention on them, building them into a major American exercise fad. The reason for their popularity is not hard to understand. They are promoted as a 90-second health program that can be performed by anyone, anywhere. Furthermore, a widely publicized German study concluded that they can enable the average person to increase his strength by a phenomenal five percent per week. The idea of health and strength in ninety seconds is very seductive, and many convenience-oriented Americans have been attracted to it.

It is not surprising that everything sounds better in print than it turns out to be in reality. A typical isometric consists of pushing against a doorjamb for a few seconds, or pulling up a chair you are sitting in. In either instance the total amount of exercise that is taking place is minimal. One set of muscles is being tensed against another set or against some immovable object. Only very specific and often isolated muscles are brought into play.

This isolation is the problem with isometrics. The muscle groups they concentrate on are the glamour muscles-the biceps or the deltoids, for example. They are cosmetic muscles; development of them makes us look better in a bathing suit but doesn't necessarily make us feel any better. This exercise in no way affects the overall health of the human body. None of them devotes one iota of energy to the cardiovascular system, internal organs, glands, or nerves. All that can possibly be achieved is larger muscles and even that is doubtful. There is no evidence that the blood supply to the muscle tissue increases enough for real building to take place, probably because isometrics would require really sustained effort to get the blood flowing properly. Consequently isometric muscles are easily fatigued and don't have the value of muscle built up by more rigorous effort.



A more serious problem is the recent evidence that isometrics make joints more vulnerable to injury. When the exercises became popular, athletes were the first to jump on the bandwagon--and they were the first to jump off. At least two football teams, the Arkansas Razorbacks and the New York Giants, tried isometrics. They soon discarded them when an unusually heavy rash of knee injuries, some requiring surgery, put a number of their players out of action.

For those still set on having larger muscles through isometrics there are other problems. There is really no way of measuring the correct amount of exercise. While authorities suggest that two thirds of a man's maximum strength held for six seconds is necessary for improvement, that is a highly subjective affair. How are you supposed to know when you are using two thirds of your strength? It's not like calisthenics or weight lifting, where all that is necessary is to increase the number of times you do something. Many athletes have been led to overdo their pursuit of bulging biceps and have ended up with injury and hospitalization.

Further research has failed to substantiate the German report of phenomenal growth through isometrics. In the opinion of most medical authorities their only

legitimate use is for bedridden patients whose muscles would otherwise waste away entirely. As a shortcut to health and physical fitness they are little more than a bad joke. It simply is not possible to construct any exercise program that takes ninety seconds a day and will be of any significant value.

## CALISTHENICS AND WEIGHT LIFTING

A definite improvement over isometrics, calisthenics (or isotonic exercises) and weight lifting not only contract the muscles but produce movement. Isometrics tend to be one-dimensional--pushing or pulling in a single direction--while calisthenics produce a wide range of motion, giving the muscles more staying power. Like isometrics, however, such exercises are devoted solely to the size and strength of individual muscles and thus have little significance on overall health. Push-ups, for instance, are little more than arms and shoulders working like pistons. Other than keeping the back straight, they bring no other area of the body into play. Much of the same is true of weight lifting. Hauling a hundred pounds over one's head in no way affects the digestive or respiratory system, but serves only to reinforce the skeletal muscles. Many calisthenics fans would react violently to this statement: "But I'm in great shape, never felt better in my life!" or "I feel really alive, full of pep!" These are subjective self-assessments, however. What is actually happening is that a half-measure is fooling the body into thinking that it is well off. Since the body is building some tissue as opposed to doing nothing, a feeling of well-being results. This in turn promotes a state of mental confidence that contributes to the overall state of health. So people who do these forms of exercise are healthier than an average member of the community. But this is not full health, and isotonic fail to directly stimulate the vital organs, nerves, and glands from which true well-being flows. A man can have a superbly muscled physique and still have kidney stones. Jon E. was a well-built college athlete with offers to play professional ball. He never made it, though, because a liver weakness that the medical men still don't understand put him on the sidelines for life. Arnie F. was a big bear of a man, but ulcers and other digestive problems completely wasted his body and he was little more than a skeleton when he died. The sad thing is that very possibly if these men had concentrated on



developing their vital inner organs with the same devotion they gave to their skeletal muscles, these weaknesses would never have developed.

## JOGGING, CYCLING, AND SWIMMING

These activities are not considered exercise in the Orient; they are practiced for pleasure. Not so in the West, where medical authorities claim they are the most therapeutic exercise they have to offer. At the moment, they are right. These activities produce longer, more resilient muscle tissue than the short, lumpy tissue that comes with isotonics. They bring large areas of the body into play and they are beneficial to the vital cardiovascular system. Yet, compared to the Chinese system, they service only half the body. Intensive research hasn't shown swimming, cycling, and jogging to have the least effect on the nervous, glandular, and intestinal systems, not to mention the other vital internal organs whose perfect functioning your body's well-being depends upon. Western medicine, though, is beginning to recognize the importance of exercising the inner man as a means to better health, but they have a long way to go, compared to the East.

Chinese health authorities consider jogging a sport, not exercise. Sports are something the body has to be conditioned for, not something to be jumped into after the body hasn't been used for the last twenty years. Even Western authorities agree on this, and are recommending that no one in middle age take up sports without having a complete physical checkup, including an electrocardiogram. Besides giving the skeletal muscles a workout, the brunt of the effort when jogging falls on the heart, the lungs, and the circulatory system. The young, growing body can deal with this type of strain more effectively than an older body that has ceased to develop. Furthermore, when you jog, your insides are jarred every time your feet hit the pavement, and that is a tough beating for unconditioned organs to take.

Sports generally come out a poor second best to Chinese exercises. In the vital area of concentration and breath control-the cornerstone of the Chinese system-they do not function at all. The use of these important aids give the Chinese exercises a meditationlike aspect, the antithesis of violent activity. Almost any Western exercise leaves you huffing, puffing, and sweating, but the Ancient Art Exercises leave you relaxed, refreshed and with little or no perspiration. There are none of the violent strains that displace the bodily organs. Then there is the matter of convenience. It is absolutely necessary to devote a substantial amount of time to any sport. You dress in special clothes (sweat suits, bathing suits, etc.), find a suitable place to run, swim, or cycle, and then get yourself there. You suffer a period of exhaustion following your activity, and then a period of relaxation.

Those who take up Chinese exercises are not faced with these problems. No special place or equipment is needed, nor is a period of recuperation necessary. The Chinese exercises are extraordinary in their convenience and ease of performance.

If there is no Kung Fu master in your town, this book alone is all you need to learn the exercises. Every exercise is supremely simple. Each one contains only a handful of basic movements that can be easily and accurately captured on film. It is not necessary to do them perfectly in order to gain benefit either. Just getting close is enough to feel your body start to change. This in turn will make you self-correct. The exercises literally guide you along, rewarding you and making you





feel better as you do each exercise better.



## A DAILY PROGRAM

Some readers will be tempted to skim this chapter and go on to the exercises themselves. Do not do so. The next few pages make some essential points.

The Silk-Weaving Exercises are the product of the Oriental mind, and as such should not be performed in an Occidental manner. The rules of the game are different. In fact, you may need to devote some thought to fitting Chinese exercises into your daily schedule. This chapter will deal with the problems you\_ may have to face in adjusting your life.

### When to Perform the Exercises

There are two periods during the day that are best suited to performing Kung Fu: in the morning, after rising, and in the early evening, before dinner. Chinese masters consider these to be optimal hours for a number of reasons. First, the stomach is empty. Men, like animals, are quicker on their feet and more nimble with their minds when they are a little hungry. A full stomach tends to make one sluggish and sleepy. Furthermore, digestion starts a long series of events that specifically stimulate a number of internal organs in a way that is contrary to the effect that the exercises are trying to achieve. For instance, the digestive process brings a great deal of blood into the walls of the stomach and the intestines; this is blood that the exercises are trying to systematically distribute to the other internal organs. Another part of the digestive process is peristalsis, a muscular, rhythmic squeezing movement produced by the intestines during digestion. The Silk-Weaving Exercises stimulate the intestines by moving and stretching them in a number of directions all opposed to the function of peristalsis. Doing the exercises after eating would tend to strain the area being exercised. So even if you are not able to perform them at the times specified, always wait five or six hours after your last meal.

Once you do pick a time, stick to it. The body has a number of natural rhythms, such as sleep, feeding, excretion-and exercise" If it is done regularly, the body responds easily. Both body and mind fight change, however, so make things easy for yourself.

### Where to Perform the Exercises

One way to help develop your internal rhythm is to do the exercises in the same place. Set aside a special corner of your room and always do them there. Try not to perform any other activity there and you will build up, a positive association with the corner. It is essential that the place where you exercise be well ventilated and neither dusty nor dirty. Much of the benefit of the exercises is derived from deep breathing, so the air you take in must be as pure as possible. The corner must also be quiet and peaceful. Concentration plays a vital role in these exercises, and there should be no distracting influences. If your thoughts ramble during practice you may not perform the exercise properly, the circulation of your Ch'i will be impeded and you will make little or no progress.

### How Often to Perform the Exercises



Ideally they should be performed daily. However, if you have not exercised in some time it is advisable to start more slowly and gradually work yourself up to once a day. Try twice a week for the first month. The intervening three or four days between exercising is just as important as the exercises themselves. It is in that period that the stimulated organs respond by building more cells. To exercise them immediately again is straining them and not allowing them to rebuild.

After the first month, increase the program to every other day. The internal organs should be ready to bear the strain by then. However, if you are not feeling stronger, drop back to twice a week until feelings of new strength appear. Once you are at the every-other-day level, there should be a marked difference in your energy output. You should sleep more soundly, wake up more easily, and have a greater capacity for work and play. After a month, you should be ready to increase the program to once a day. This is not as much as it seems, because the entire beginner program should be completed in under fifteen minutes. You will increase this time only if you decide to learn the more advanced techniques. If you wish to go on to the more difficult exercises, it is essential to condition your body more thoroughly. This is accomplished by doing the beginning exercises every day, twice a day for at least six weeks. Then the advanced exercises are added to the daily regimen one at a time at the rate of one a week. The advanced exercises are not essential to the program, although they are of considerable benefit. They have been included for those who want more challenging exercises to perform and who are seriously thinking of deeper involvement in Kung Fu. They are more akin to the advanced forms of the martial-art schools, and are a necessary adjunct to martial-arts training.

### Mental Attitudes

Besides the physical reasons for the seemingly slow start suggested for these exercises (twice a week), there is a mental one. Starting in once a day every day tends to be discouraging. It is too demanding, and after the first burst of enthusiasm has worn off there is a tendency to drop the program as being too rigorous. The gradual building of the program allows your brain to get used to the discipline required to perform these exercises daily.

Even more important is the mental state while performing the exercises. You must have nothing else on your mind. You must pick a time of day when there is nothing else to do. Just before dinner is excellent because you have finished the day's work and have nothing to look forward to but your leisure. The morning is also very good providing you can get up early enough to give yourself the fifteen minutes of absolute privacy that the exercises require. If you force yourself to rush through the exercises or have something else on your mind, the entire purpose of the exercises has been defeated. Besides stimulating the internal organs, the exercises are supposed to slow your mind down and put you more in touch with yourself. This cannot be accomplished if there are all sorts of pressures on you. Better to skip a night than to perform the exercises in an improper state of mind.

### Smoking and Drinking



The purpose of these exercises is to purify your body. Drinking, smoking, or any drug taking produces the opposite effect. As long as you persist in doing any or all of these things you are negating the effects of the exercises. This is not to say that you will not make some progress; you will, but it will be at a much slower rate than without these drugs.

Smoking is of particular detriment, as much of the success of these exercises lies with developing deeper lung power. But virtually any drug is putting a strain on the cleansing and excretory organs, and a strained organ does not respond well to additional stimulation. So, if possible, give up these habits before initiating an exercise program.

## Diet

Once again purity is the watchword. Eat natural foods, not ones loaded with or constructed upon artificial chemicals. Every artificial chemical you put into your body is filtered out by your liver and kidneys -why make them work harder? Eat plenty of fresh vegetables. Your diet should be eighty percent vegetables. By vegetables I mean fruits, whole grains, and fresh or frozen vegetables (never canned). Grains are particularly valuable and should be eaten every day. Grains must be chewed thoroughly, for corn, brown rice, and other grains that are not mashed to a pulp by your teeth will not be properly digested and will pass through the system intact. Grains that are not digested will be visible in your bowel movement.

The other twenty percent of your diet should be composed of lean meat, fish, and milk products. It is advisable to keep the consumption of milk products down. (Incidentally, Orientals consider milk and milk products to be repellent. The idea of cheese, let alone the sight or smell, is enough to make most feel revulsion. Milk is something only babies drink, and it is considered unhealthy for anyone over the age of six.) Milk and milk products are part of the Western way of life, but they should be consumed in moderation because of their high cholesterol content.

## Ginseng

No discussion of Oriental health is complete without the inclusion of ginseng, an herb revered throughout Asia for its purgative powers. Moreover, no health and exercise program is complete without it. Ginseng is systematically cultivated throughout China, and Chinese doctors and Kung Fu masters urge their charges to consume it as part of their daily regimen. It has numerous curative powers, many of which have been substantiated by modern science. Analysis has shown that ginseng contains calcium, iron, potassium, phosphorus, glucose, and sodium, which make it a kind of super vitamin pill. The effect on the body, though, is determined by both how it is prepared and what your body needs at the moment.

Once in the body, ginseng is highly adaptive, and the reaction that one gets depends on what your body needs at the time it is being administered. A person with indigestion will have his stomach soothed. A man suffering from vertigo will regain his equilibrium. Headaches, and particularly hangovers, can be cured in thirty minutes if ginseng is ingested on an empty stomach. It is an excellent way of toning the central nervous system, so it will pep you up if you are tired, as well as alleviate depression. Science also recommends it as a first-rate regulator of high blood pressure. Ginseng's powers as a sexual restorative are famous, but these claims should be taken with a grain of salt because sexual pleasure is so much a matter of suggestion.





The preparation of ginseng can determine its effect on the body. For example, a dash of raw minced ginseng is used as a restorative for frail children. Ginseng that has been boiled down considerably is used to combat and break fevers. A light broth of ginseng and bamboo leaves makes a mild sedative. Then there is a wide variety of combinations of ginseng and other herbs, which produce a whole range of positive results.

Some of the most amazing powers of ginseng are just being uncovered by Western science. The Soviet Union and Bulgaria, in particular, have paid it a considerable amount of attention. A number of interesting experiments have taken place at the Vladivostok Medical Institute and the Postgraduate Medical Institute in Sofia.

In 1965, out of a group of 152 Russian children suffering from the aftereffects of paralytic polio, seventy-nine received a fluid extract of ginseng root for six weeks in addition to other treatment. The other seventy-three children acted as a control group and received no ginseng. Then the tone of the muscles in the hip and the knee were measured. In both sets of muscles the tone was significantly greater for the children fed ginseng than for the control group. Furthermore, there was definitely a significant increase in the body weight of the group receiving ginseng.

In 1967, Russian researchers injected two groups of rats with strychnine. An hour and a half before the injections one group was injected with ginseng extract, while the other was given nothing. All the animals in the control group died, but fifty percent of the animals that received ginseng lived. Moreover, the fifty percent that died 'held out considerably longer than those in the control group.

Both these experiments are fascinating in that they demonstrate ginseng's physical curative powers, but an experiment that took place in Bulgaria in 1965 shows the ability of this amazing herb to be beneficial in emotional/mental situations: Here the test animals were subjected to severe stress which was so powerful that it killed three out of ten in the control group. The group that received ginseng adapted successfully to the stress situation, and none died. Chemical monitoring of the bodily functions of both groups revealed that the control group's hormone level rose alarmingly, while the experimental group's actually fell.

"These dramatic experiments prove once again the validity of the traditional Chinese medical system, which has been scoffed at in the West as superstition. In recent years the West has looked to the laboratory for its cures, but the East has looked to nature and found the value of what is both in and around man.

Ginseng is currently widely available in a variety of forms in this country. It can be found in herb stores, health food stores, and Chinese markets, and it usually comes with instructions for use. It actually grows wild in much of the United States. However, the highest-quality ginseng comes from China and Korea. Oriental ginseng that is of the highest quality can be distinguished from Western ginseng or ginseng of lesser potency by its distinctive dark-red color. No matter what the source, all of it is good for you and should be consumed daily for the first six weeks of the program, every other day for the next six weeks, and finally weekly for an additional three months. After this six-month period is up there will most likely be little need for ginseng on a regular basis, although it may be used if specific problems arise.



Chapter Seven



## THE EXERCISES

Since the Ancient Art Exercises are totally unlike Western physical culture, some preliminary instruction is essential to prepare a Western student of the exercises.

### Relaxation

Relaxation is the first key. The Chinese believe that physiological and psychological tension saps man's vital life force. Consequently each set of exercises begins and ends with a period of relaxation. Under no circumstances should therapeutic exercise lead to tension, much less exhaustion. There are a few simple techniques to relax the exerciser and set him at his ease, and they are laid out in the preliminary exercise program at the beginning of the next chapter.

### Deep Breathing

This is the second key. It is totally different from ordinary breathing and is a skill that has to be carefully acquired. For example, most Westerners associate deep breathing with chest expansion, while the Kung Fu man recognizes that deep breathing is the result of abdominal and diaphragm control. In addition, deep breathing requires a conscious effort, while ordinary breathing is an involuntary response much like the beating of the heart. The most important point is that deep breathing entirely empties the lungs, while the ordinary kind is so shallow as hardly to cause the rib cage to move. Consequently, in order to do the Ancient Art Exercises it is necessary to learn new breathing habits, which is not as hard as it sounds, as, in fact, everyone is an unconscious expert at deep breathing. Every night, at some point during your sleep, your body resorts to deep breathing. The body uses this as a method of cleansing the lungs and purifying the blood.

The total relaxation - that occurs in sleep must be learned in order to duplicate this deep breathing while awake. Sit in a comfortable position and systematically and consciously relax every muscle in your body. Start with the muscles of your feet, then relax your calves, your thighs, and so on. Once relaxed, inhale deeply through your nose while expanding your abdomen. Do not move your chest. This manoeuvre is accomplished by your diaphragm - the muscle under the lungs, stretched across the top of the abdominal cavity. As the diaphragm expands and contracts the lungs inhale and exhale.

As you inhale, a cool stream of air will be felt at the back of the throat. Follow this stream down the throat, past the larynx (voice box), through the trachea (windpipe), into the top of the lungs, down into the middle lung, and into the lower lung. Allow all three parts of the lung to fill from the bottom up. While exhaling, stick your tongue to the roof of your mouth and blow the air out through your teeth. Here the process is reversed, with the top of the lungs emptying first, the middle second, and the bottom third. (Note: the process is not done in three separate actions, but as one smooth continuous flow.)

After repeating the process several times, become conscious of the rib cage-it should be gently rising and falling. If the chest moves, you are overexerting yourself. Only the rib cage should expand and contract.



The physical aspect of deep breathing I have just described is but the first step of the procedure. In the next stage, using your imagination, it is necessary to channel your breath through your body in a definite pattern. While inhaling, picture the air circulating to the back of your head, running down to the base of the spine, and then coming up the front of your body and out your mouth. This cycle is very similar to breathing exercises found in Hatha Yoga, where it is also used to achieve unification of the body and the mind. One word of caution: it is absolutely necessary that the breathing be performed rhythmically, in a smooth uninterrupted cycle. Inhale and exhale slowly and you will feel, see, and hear your breath circulating throughout your body.

The precise effects of this type of respiration have been known throughout the Orient for thousands of years. Chuang-tzu, the fourth-century Chinese philosopher, stated that men of great wisdom fetch their breath up from deep inside and below, while ordinary men breathe - with their larynx alone. Chinese medicine maintains that the lower part of our lungs are seldom sufficiently emptied, and that stale air saturated with waste products tends to accumulate there. Since the lungs are responsible for oxygenating the blood, the presence of these waste products affects virtually every organ in the body. Thus the deep breathing alone, even without the accompanying Ancient Art Exercises, can produce a beneficial effect, particularly when you are tired.

Furthermore, proper expansion and contraction of the lungs produce still another dividend. As the movements of the diaphragm are accentuated to permit deep breathing, the nearby liver and spleen are massaged and thereby strengthened.

Deep breathing is performed throughout a set of the Ancient Art Exercises, in concert with the movements. They have two purposes: (1) to speed the highly oxygenated blood to the specific areas that are stimulated by a particular exercise, where the super oxygenated blood combines with foodstuffs to provide more energy and greater stimulation; and (2) to clear the mind and aid concentration.

### Concentration

Concentration is the third key to proper performance of the Ancient Art Exercises. Besides better physical health, a major goal of the exercises is to relieve tension. This is accomplished by reaching what Orientals call "one-pointedness of mind." This is said to be achieved by concentration through nonconcentration and is best explained by the following example.

The southern Buddhist school teaches a meditation called the walking meditation, wherein the monks walk for miles oblivious of their surroundings, concentrating solely on the rising and falling of their feet. Here, as in the Ancient Art Exercises, the body's actions become the vehicle and the focal point for mental energy. Eventually the monk ceases to experience the fact that he is walking. Instead, the doer and the action fuse and become one. Where there was once "the monk experiencing walking" there is now only "walking" in the man's mind as his ego becomes completely submerged to the act. The Ancient Art Exercises, combined with deep breathing, have the same goal-the expansion of concentration skills through nonconcentration, which in this case means involvement so deep that you actually lose awareness of your surroundings and the only thing you perceive is the action of the exercise. Concentration should be so deep that the exercises literally do themselves. When this occurs you get maximum benefit, because there is no other exertion expended, either physically or mentally. This, in turn, permits the exerciser to





experience inner unity and strengthening of his interior life energy force.

## Grace

Grace is the final key to the Ancient Art Exercises. The movements should have a gentle flow, each melting imperceptibly into the next motion just as the water from a small stream flows into a mighty river. All movements are soft, with an almost balletlike quality. Yet there is an underlying strength, just as silk is both soft and strong. They are performed as if you were pushing against an enormous weight that is slowly giving way, or as if you were moving underwater, where quick movement is impossible. A helpful device is to first remember that air pressure is fourteen pounds per square inch. Then try to feel that pressure on your body. As you move, become aware of how that pressure reacts to your moving through it. Keeping all of the previously mentioned instructions in mind, you are now ready to learn the actual exercises. One word of caution. It is not advisable for you to jump right in. Use a gradual approach, for there is too much to be learned all at once. Practice the breathing exercise until you are totally familiar with it. This is a new system of breathing, and trying to combine it with unfamiliar exercises is asking for problems. Next practice the movements without the breathing technique until you find they are second nature to you. In fact they are both of substantial benefit even when not used in combination. Finally, when you are sure of both techniques, combine them according to the directions to the right of the pictures -and start your body on the road to improvement.

## Chapter Eight

### DEMONSTRATING THE EXERCISES

#### Warm-up Exercises

The importance of bringing the correct mental attitude to the Silk-Weaving Exercises cannot be over emphasized. The relaxation, grace, concentration, and breathing mentioned in the last chapter are all examples of what the masters mean by correct mental attitude. Since the necessary state is not quickly achieved by the novice, thousands of years ago the Kung Fu masters prescribed two exercises to bring the body and the mind into harmony before going on to the bulk of the program. Each of the two warm-up exercises is carefully constructed to balance the effect of the other, and to lead the practitioner into a higher state of mental awareness by first putting his body at ease. The first exercise, Loosening Sinews, relaxes the musculature, thereby alleviating surface tension. The second exercise, Horse Position, stretches the loosened sinews, thereby affecting deeper bodily tension.

Of course, there are more mundane reasons for warm-up exercises. Any athlete, dancer, or active type will tell you that a warmed-up body bends more easily, is more agile, has more grace, and in general will respond on a higher level than a body that has not been warmed up.

If you exclude all that has just been mentioned, one final reason for performing the warm-up exercises remains. They are by themselves beneficial and can only lead to improvement of your overall health. For example, the Horse Position, in particular, has long been recognized



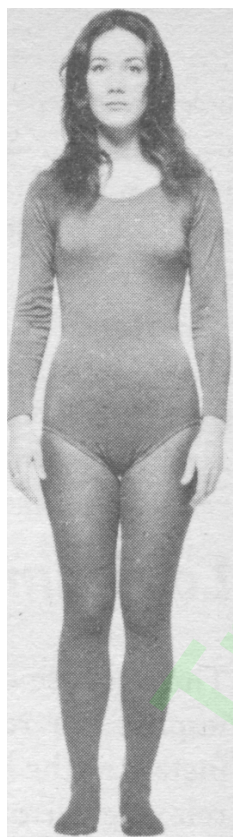
throughout China for its wide medicinal effects.

### Loosening Sinews

The purpose of this exercise is exactly what the name implies: to relax the skeletal muscles, and in some instances the bones. This is achieved by systematically relaxing all of the body's extremities, one at a time. The exercise is astonishingly similar to other such exercises done in the West as well as those found in Eastern Yoga. It is such a natural exercise to perform that the coincidence is most likely a case of simultaneous evolution.

Loosening Sinews is unique among Kung Fu exercises because it is not performed using the deep breathing technique that all the remaining exercises utilize. Moreover, it has no specialized function regarding internal organs, as do the rest of the Silk Weaving Exercises. Its sole purpose is the mental and physical relaxation of the body before going on to the heart of the program. Consequently, it is the easiest exercise to perform. No doubt the Kung Fu masters' intentions were to ease their students into the exercises that follow - a wise goal considering that the body does not respond readily to change, even of a mild variety.

Stand erect, with feet comfortably placed. Relax your arms and hands by allowing them to hang loosely at your sides.



Simultaneously shake arms and hands as if you were trying to shake drops of water from your



fingertips.



Lift your right leg and shake it gently as in the previous movement.

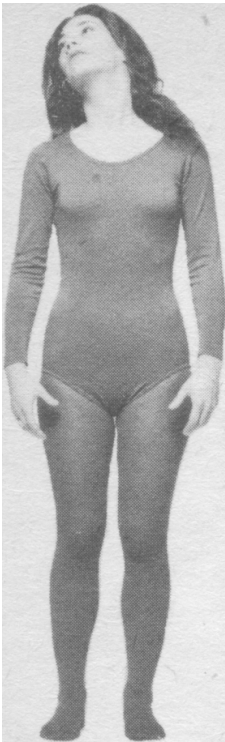
Repeat the same procedure with your left leg.

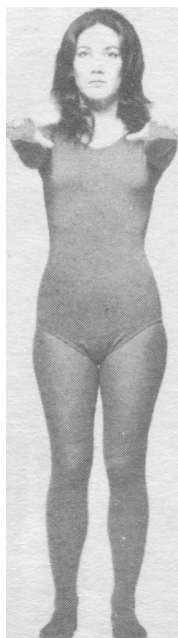


Consciously attempt to relax the neck muscles, then allow your head to drop as far forward as possible.



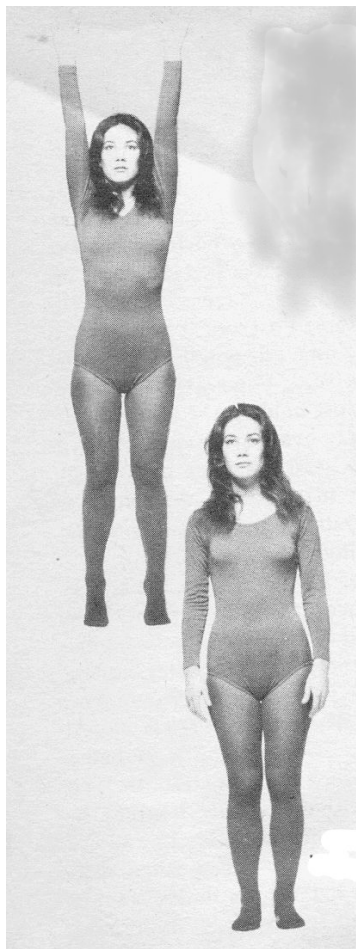
Slowly revolve your head clockwise for two revolutions and counter clockwise for two revolutions. If you are at ease this will crack your upper spine.





Standing erect, slowly bring your hands up from your sides, palms parallel to the floor, arms held in front of the body.

Continue the upward movement of your arms until they are stretched vertically and are on the same plain as the rest of your body. At the same time, raise yourself as high as you can on the balls of your feet. hold this position for a count of five, then slowly allow your arms to return to your sides and your heels to the floor.



Return to the position that you began the exercise with. Standing completely still., feel your muscles relax.

Perform Loosening sinews twice every time you exercise. Although twice is enough, the more ambitious may prefer three times.

## Horse Position

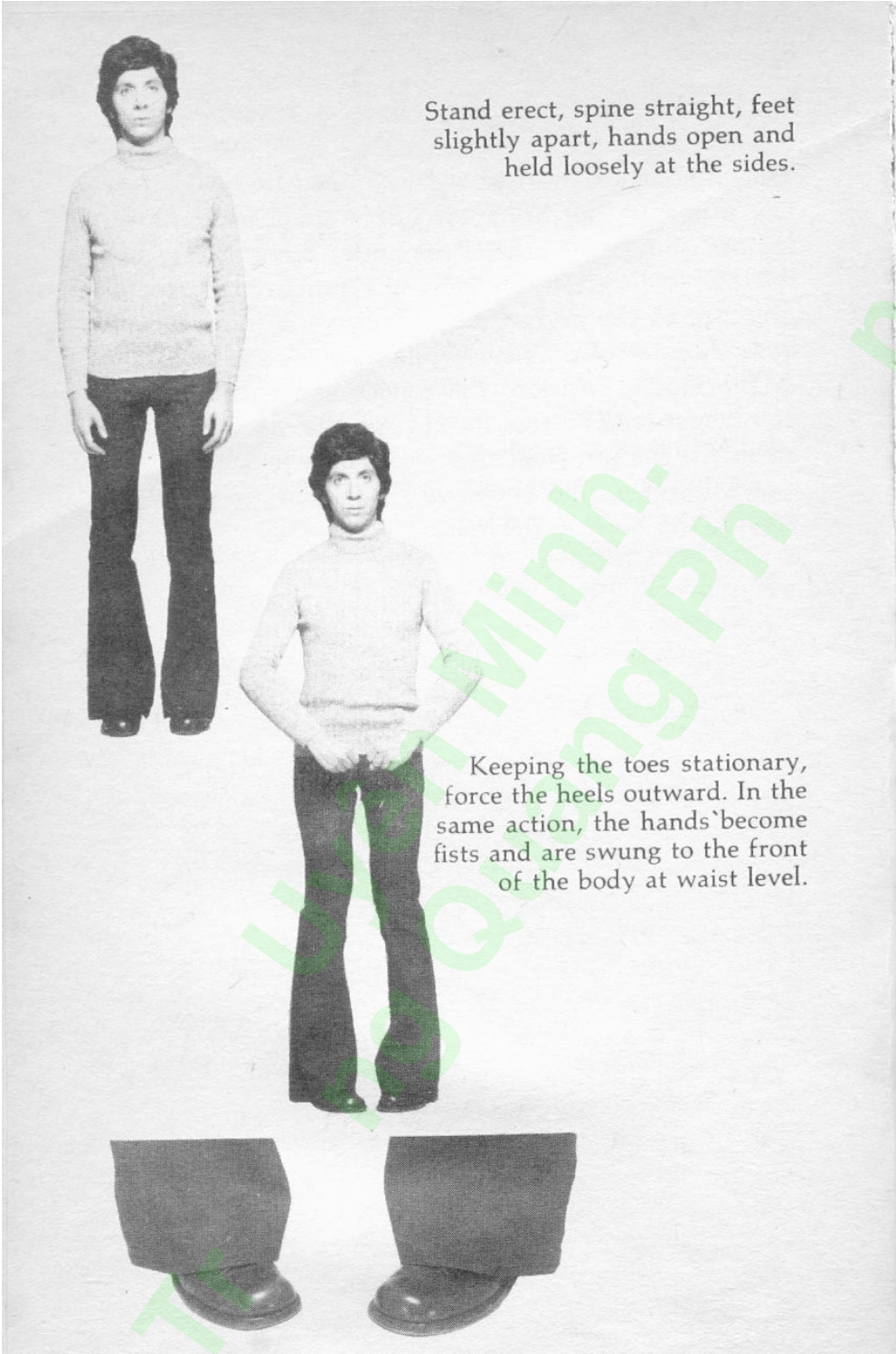
A well-known Kung Fu saying is, "Before you can learn to defeat others, you must first learn to stand." Standing, to a Kung Fu master, means the development of a strong foothold, a stance so powerful that a small man can resist the attack of a much larger one.

It is accomplished by lowering the body's center of gravity to a point just below the navel. The vehicle that achieves this is the Horse Position. It is the most important posture in all Kung Fu, whether for self defense or for health exercise. If you were to practice nothing else in this book, just holding the Horse Position for ten minutes a day would greatly improve your mental and physical health. It is a basic position used for performing many other Ancient Art Exercises and must be mastered before going on to learn more complicated things.

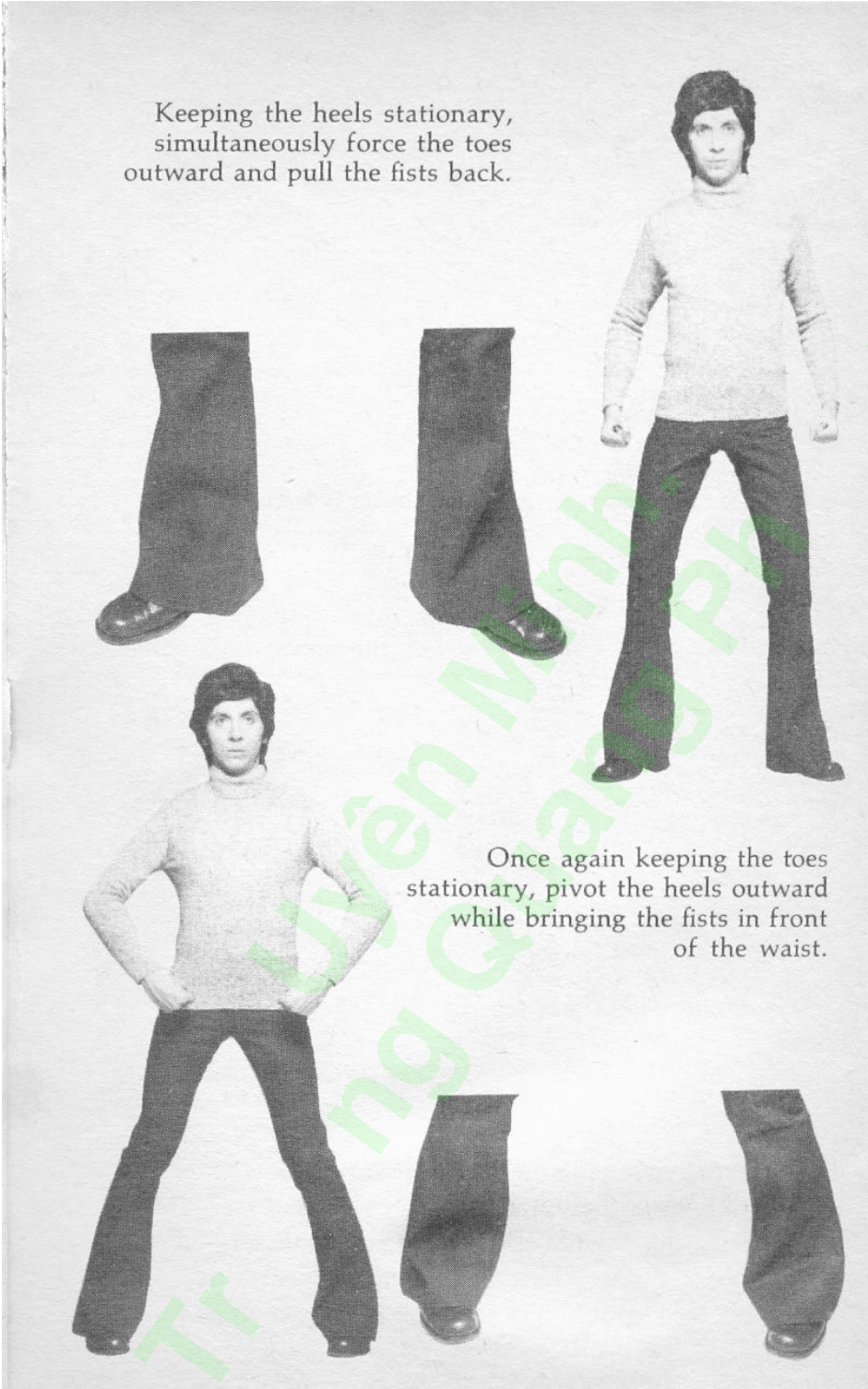
The Horse Position takes its name from the superficial similarity of the stance to that of a man riding a horse. Having performed it, you may feel an ache in your loins not unlike that one feels after having ridden a horse for a long time. After doing it you will feel a weakening of your strength. This is a good sign, as it shows that your old strength is being washed out and being replaced by new strength. The deep breathing, combined with the posture, is strengthening your lungs, increasing their capacity and allowing them to be used to the full. The average man breathes with only the top half of his lungs, leaving the bottom part unused and full of stale, impure air and preventing the fullest absorption of oxygen. Other benefits of the position are better circulation, healthier bowels and sex organs, stronger loin, leg, and back muscles, and better digestion.

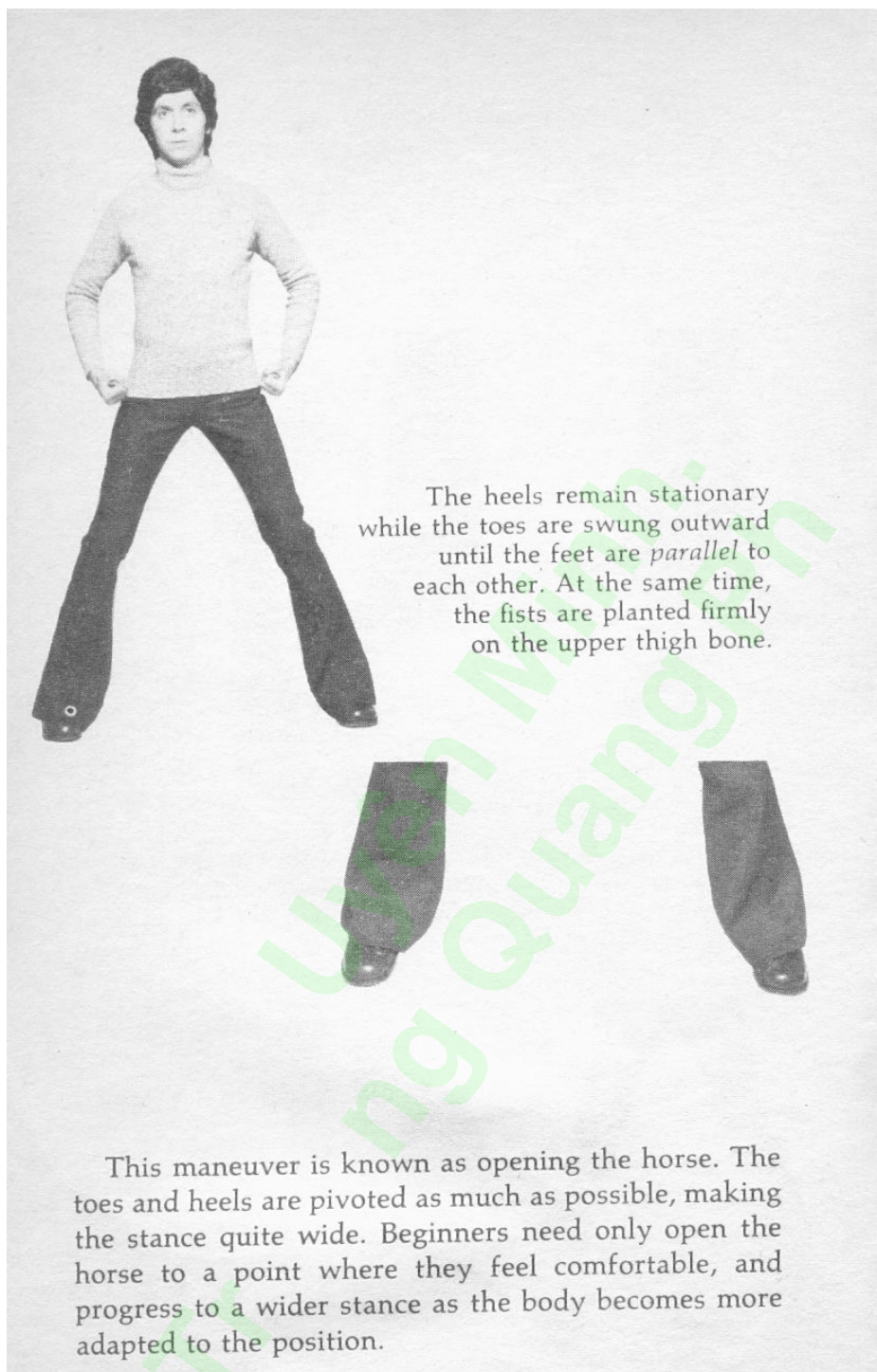
The Chinese say that a strong man is one with strong lungs and a weak man one with weak lungs. They also say that after ten years of breathing practice a person can lift a load of a thousand pounds, for breathing strengthens the entire body. Moreover, the Horse Position awakens the practitioner to the presence of the body Chi, as the exercise lowers the body's center of gravity. While inhaling and exhaling in the Horse Position, the novice concentrates on a point just below the navel. As the dormant Ch'i awakens, the life-force energy focuses just below the navel, lowering the body's gravity from a point midway up the chest to the belly.

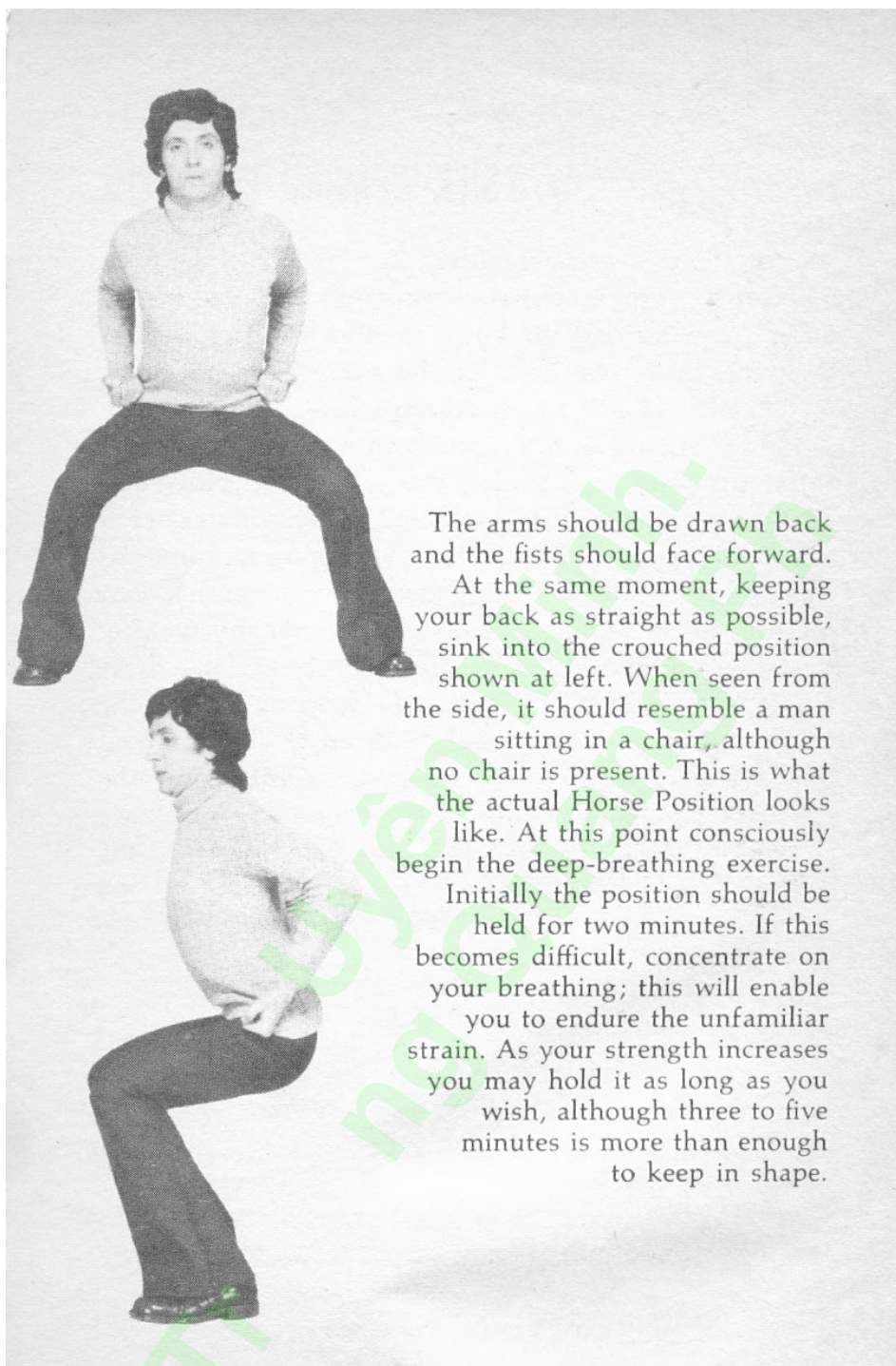












The arms should be drawn back and the fists should face forward.

At the same moment, keeping your back as straight as possible, sink into the crouched position shown at left. When seen from the side, it should resemble a man sitting in a chair, although no chair is present. This is what the actual Horse Position looks like. At this point consciously begin the deep-breathing exercise.

Initially the position should be held for two minutes. If this becomes difficult, concentrate on your breathing; this will enable you to endure the unfamiliar strain. As your strength increases you may hold it as long as you wish, although three to five minutes is more than enough to keep in shape.



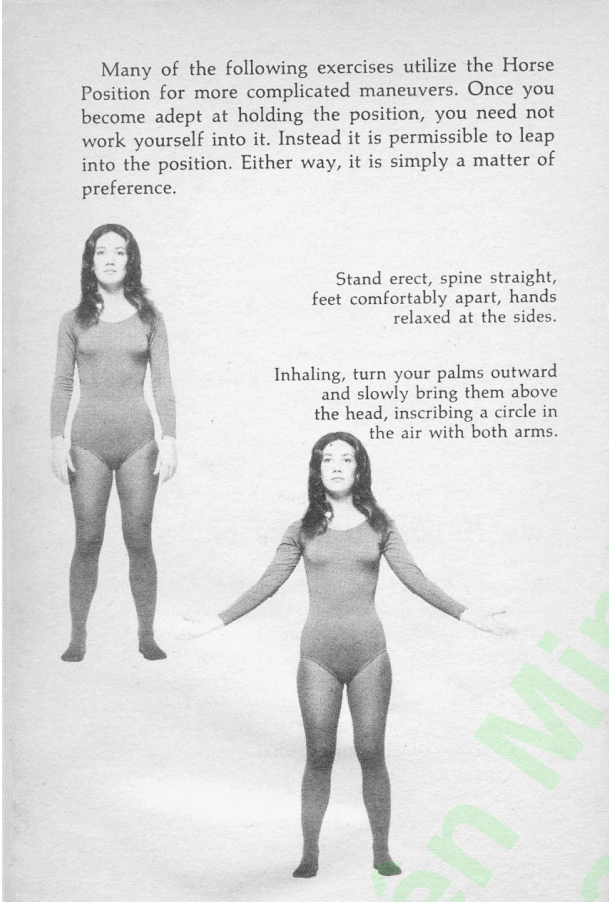
## ANCIENT ART SILK-WEAVING EXERCISES

The previous exercises, although highly beneficial in themselves, are essentially warm-up movements to relax the mind and the body for the traditional Silk Weaving Exercises. Each of these exercises has been specifically designed to produce a favorable effect on differing organs and organ groups. Originally, the entire program was twelve exercises long. However, it is the opinion of many Chinese masters that such a long initial program might be overtaxing in some instances, particularly if the man or woman has not recently taken regular exercise. Moreover, by making the program shorter - and consequently easier - there would be less of a temptation to drop out. Thus the beginning program has been reduced to the six most effective exercises. A second section following the beginner's program contains the remaining exercises as well as some more advanced movements from the Tiger Claw School. These should be added to the regimen one at a time as the practitioner develops new strength.

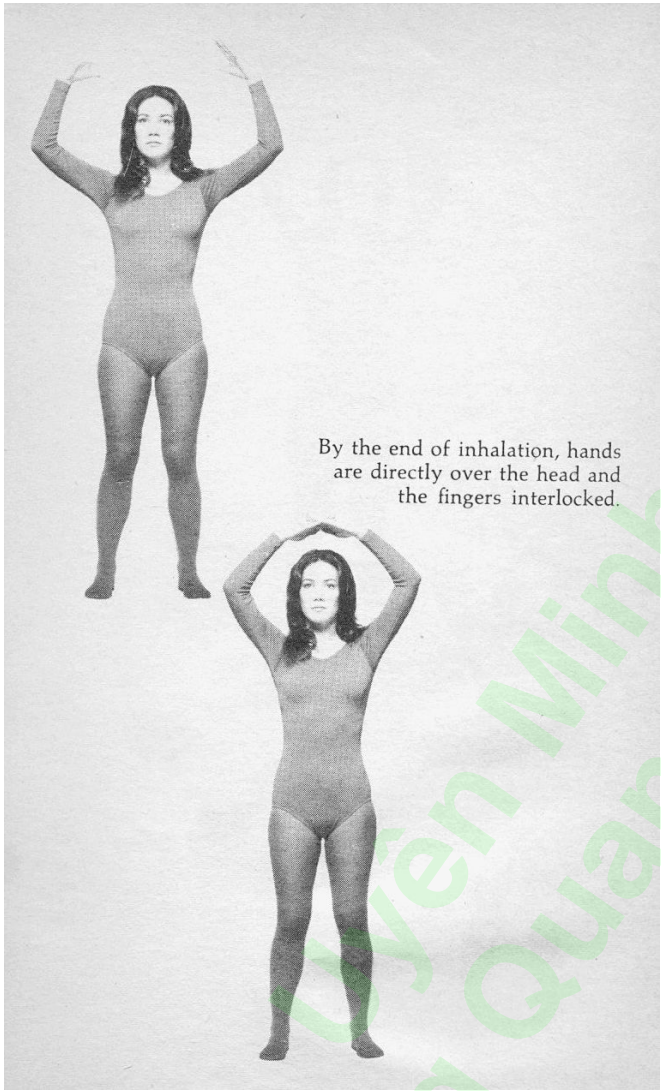
### Two Hands Push the Sky

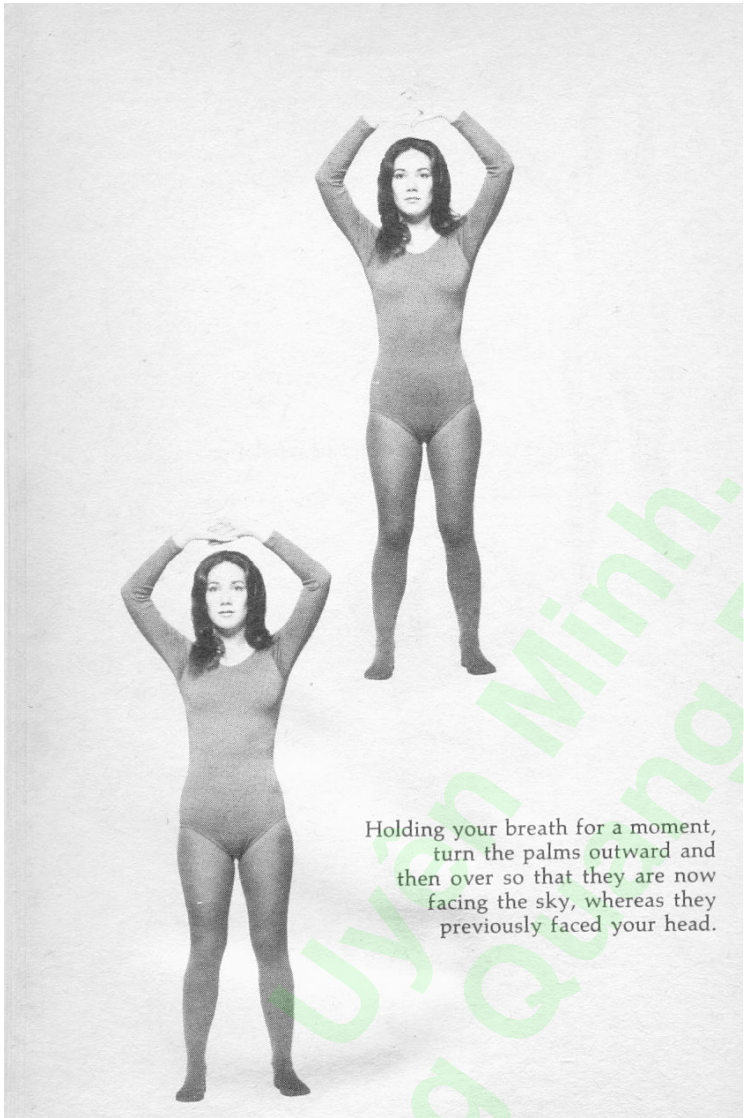
This is also known as Stretch Toward the Sky. It is traditionally the first of the standing exercises to be performed. The rationale behind the exercise becomes apparent when you do it. It is a stretching movement that expands the chest cavity. Exercised regularly, your chest will actually expand slightly. This is very important, as the subsequent exercises are designed to strengthen all of your internal organs, and exercised organs expand slightly. So a larger chest cavity and abdominal cavity are needed to comfortably accommodate these healthier organs inside. Ultimately this exercise affects every internal organ of the whole system. Other benefits are improvement of calf and forearm muscles and a more powerful diaphragm.



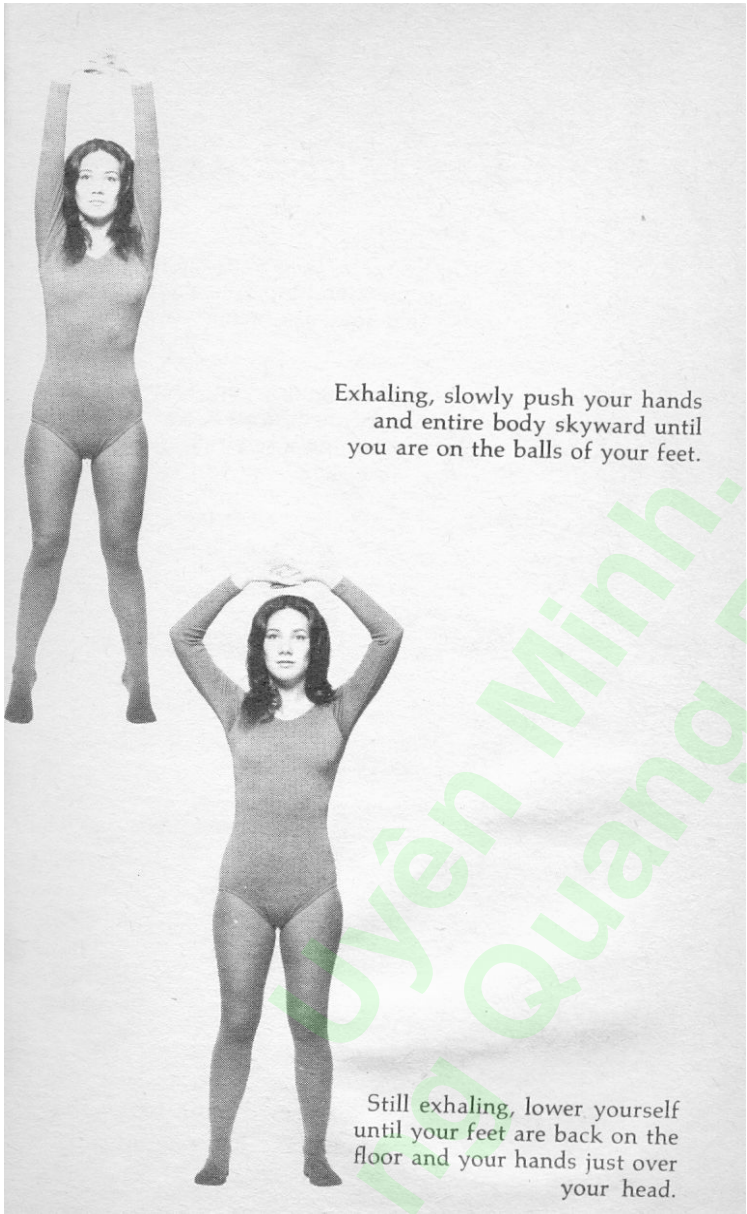


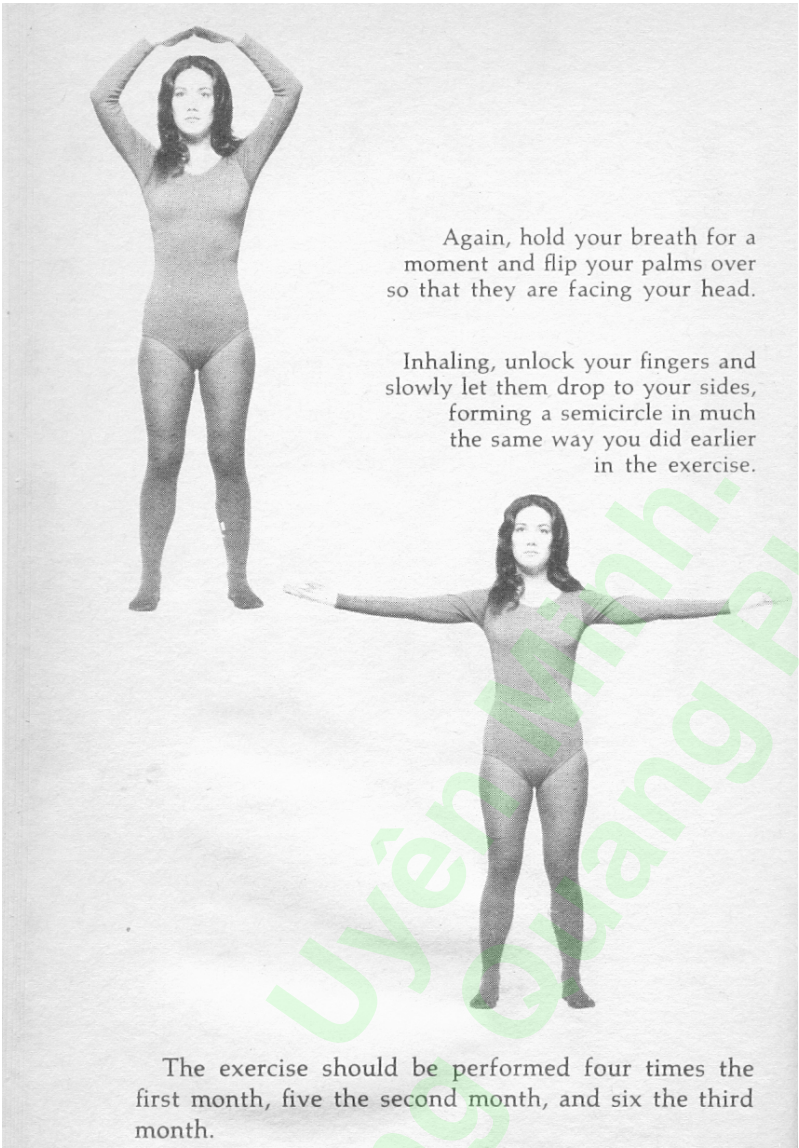






Holding your breath for a moment,  
turn the palms outward and  
then over so that they are now  
facing the sky, whereas they  
previously faced your head.





## Riding Horse, Using Bow and Arrow to Shoot Eagle

Of all the Ancient Art Exercises, "Riding Horse, Using Bow and Arrow to Shoot Eagle" is among the most distinguished. It is immensely popular among the hundreds of different Kung Fu schools, so much so that many schools have given it a similar name and now claim that it is their sect which originated it. Of course, much of the confusion can be attributed to the great age of the exercise. The legendary Ta Mo, admittedly not the first to discover the exercise, called it "Draw the Bow and Brace the Diaphragm." Other schools, changing it slightly from its original form, called it "Drawing the Bow and Killing the Wild Goose." Considering Chinese medicine's fascination with Kung Fu, it is not surprising to find this same movement in a number of ancient medical books, where it comes under the heading "Exercises for Prolonging Life." Chinese doctors particularly prescribed it for their more elderly patients, and suggested that it be performed while sitting rather than in the more difficult Horse Position.

The name of the exercise is an accurate description of what the movement looks like. It is as if the exerciser is sitting on a horse and bending a very stiff bow. However, this seemingly arduous task should never lead to tenseness or exhaustion, but should be performed slowly and gracefully, as the previous chapter suggests.

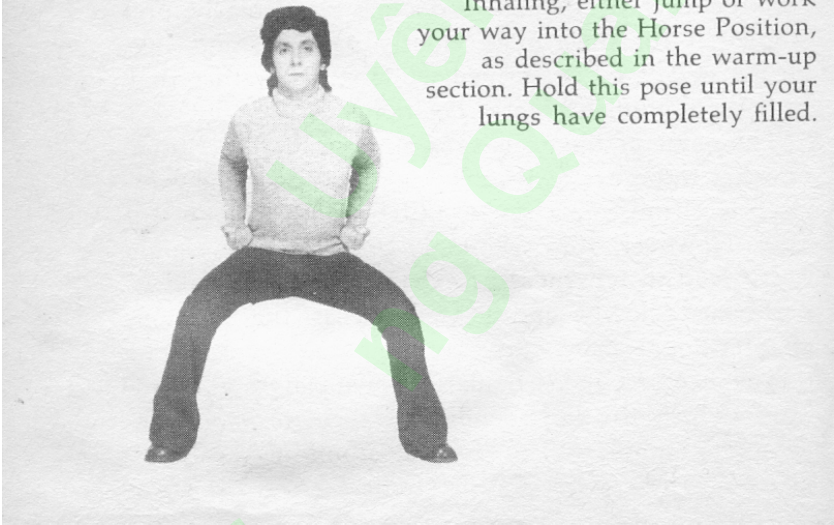
The exercise is particularly beneficial to the kidneys, which the bow-bending movements were designed to stimulate. The Horse Position has a salutary effect on the spleen and the stomach. And the effort





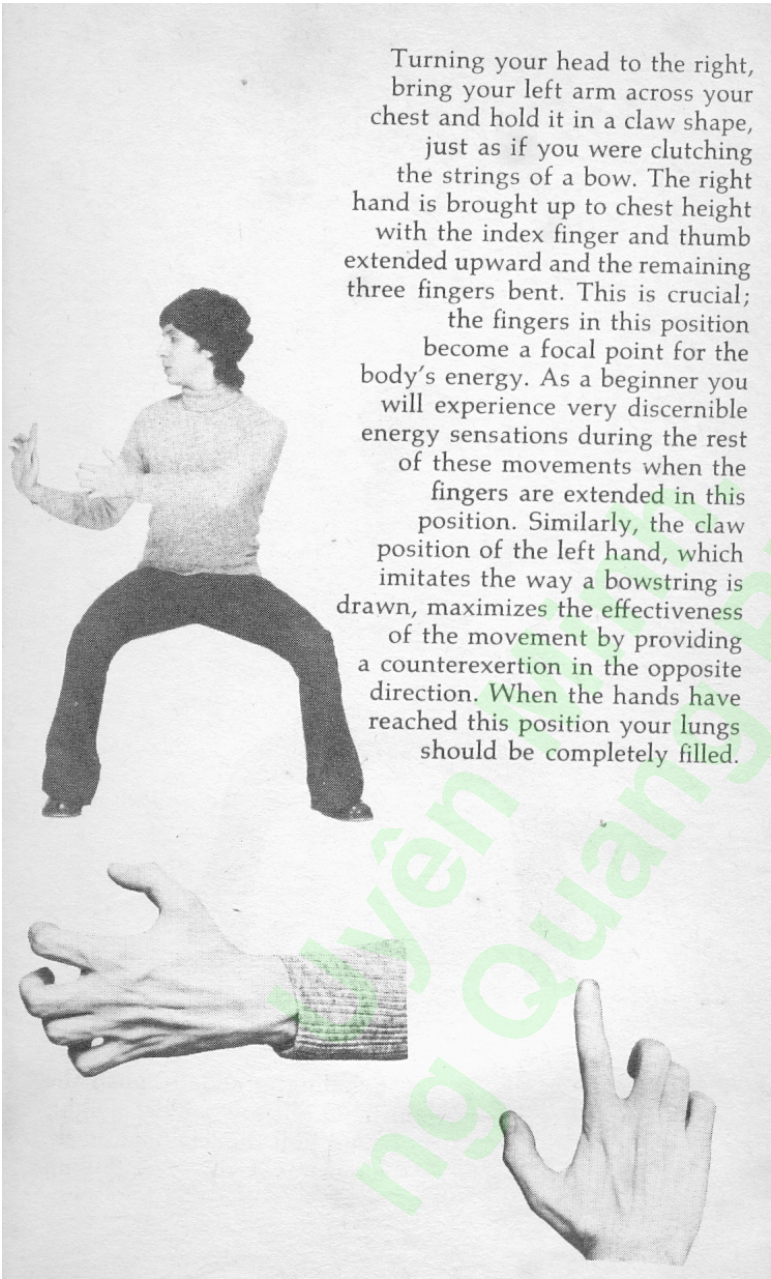
of maintaining the position is an excellent tonic for the skeletal muscles, with particular emphasis on alleviating stiffness in the neck and shoulders. It is further recommended for men and women who have trouble bending down.

Traditional Chinese medicine then goes on to state that it diminishes susceptibility to cold by increasing the circulation, and is also helpful in controlling congestion. There is a belief that it has a beneficial effect on aural problems as well.

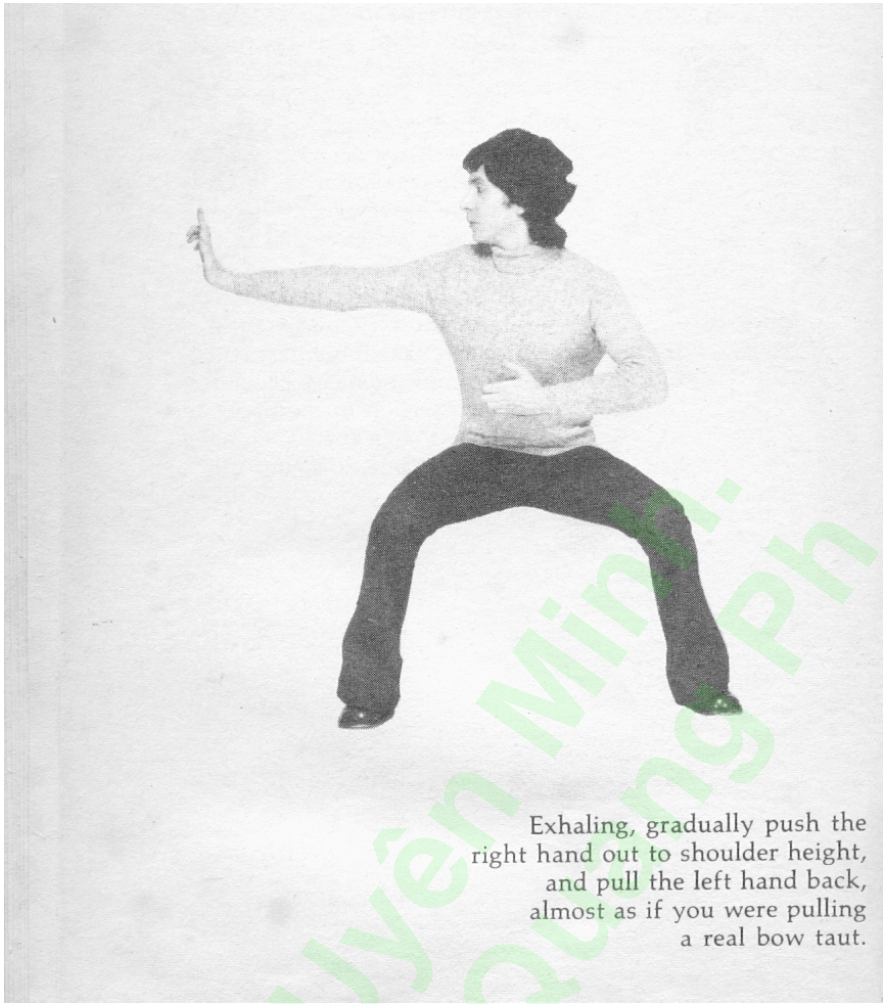


Inhaling, either jump or work your way into the Horse Position, as described in the warm-up section. Hold this pose until your lungs have completely filled.



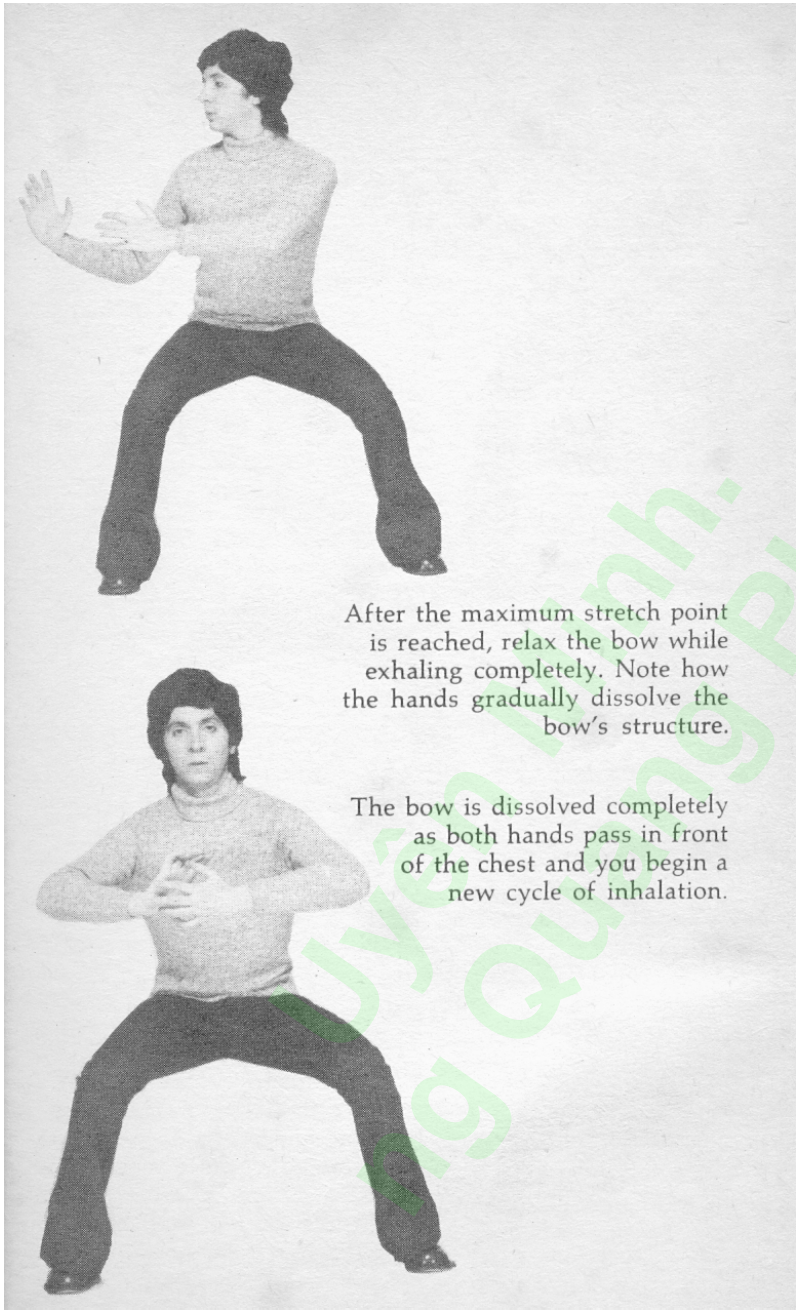


Turning your head to the right, bring your left arm across your chest and hold it in a claw shape, just as if you were clutching the strings of a bow. The right hand is brought up to chest height with the index finger and thumb extended upward and the remaining three fingers bent. This is crucial; the fingers in this position become a focal point for the body's energy. As a beginner you will experience very discernible energy sensations during the rest of these movements when the fingers are extended in this position. Similarly, the claw position of the left hand, which imitates the way a bowstring is drawn, maximizes the effectiveness of the movement by providing a counterexertion in the opposite direction. When the hands have reached this position your lungs should be completely filled.



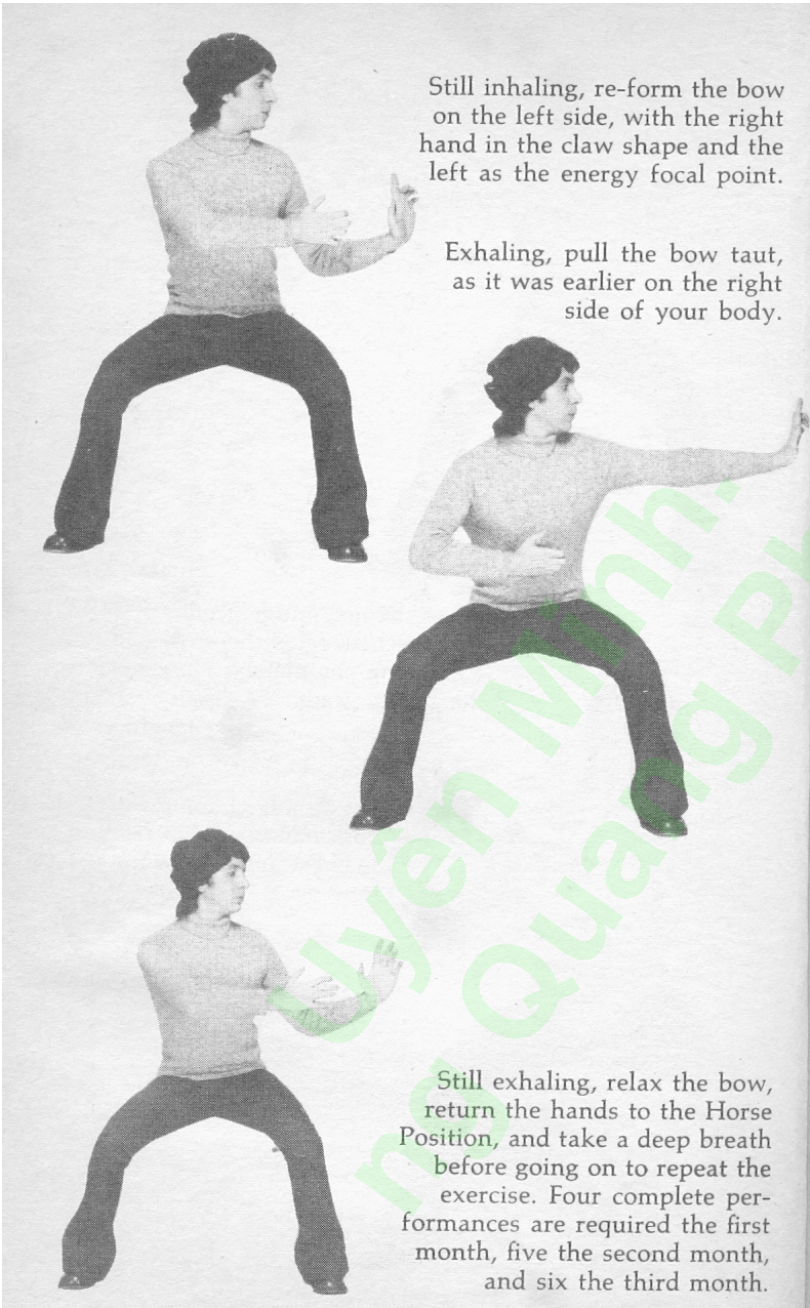
Exhaling, gradually push the  
right hand out to shoulder height,  
and pull the left hand back,  
almost as if you were pulling  
a real bow taut.





After the maximum stretch point is reached, relax the bow while exhaling completely. Note how the hands gradually dissolve the bow's structure.

The bow is dissolved completely as both hands pass in front of the chest and you begin a new cycle of inhalation.



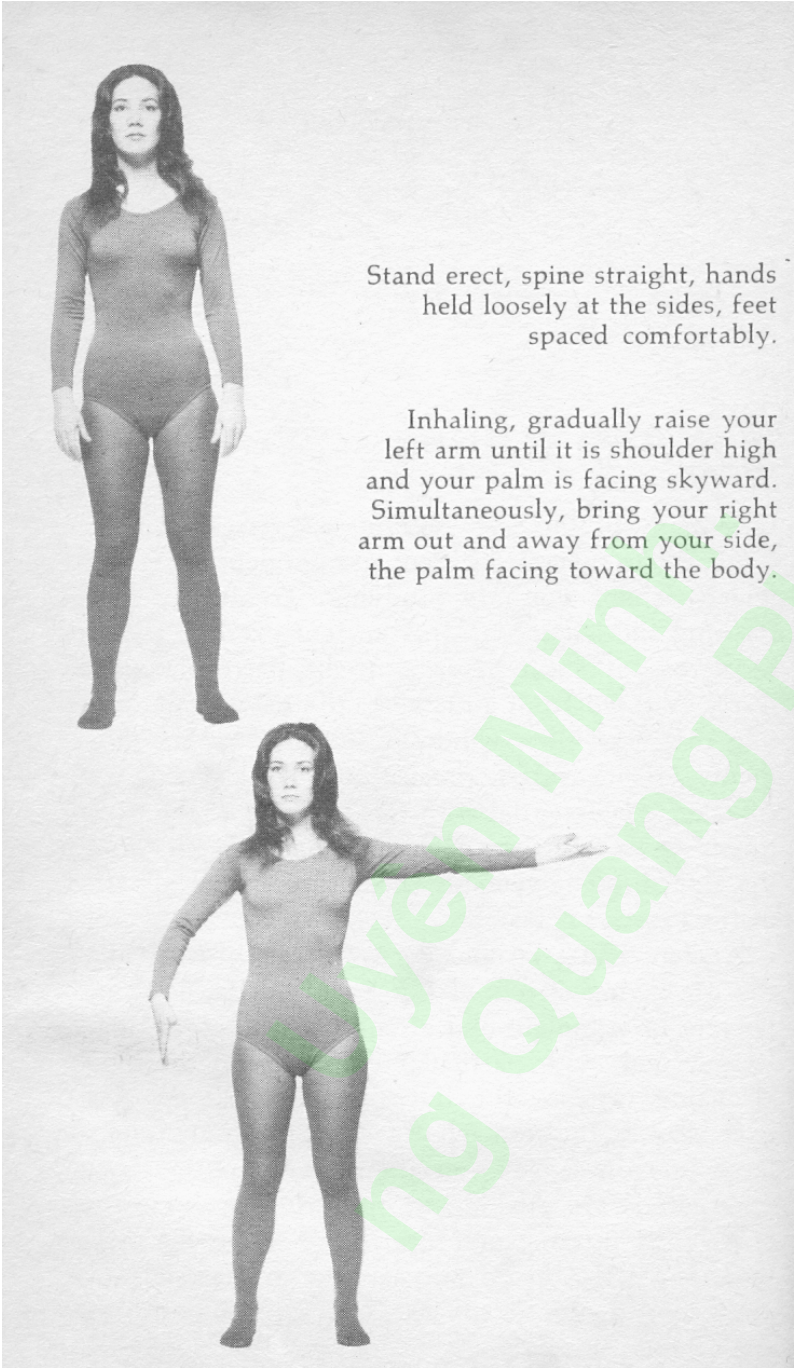


## One-Arm Raising

Like many of the Silk-Weaving Exercises, One-Arm Raising has several different names, depending upon which school you are studying. Frequently called Pushing the Mountain, this ancient exercise requires much coordination in order to be performed effectively. Viewed from a distance, the practitioner looks like an out-of-kilter windmill. But up close the movements are measured, precise, and well timed. Concentration is essential with this exercise. If the practitioner doesn't perform each movement in concert with the opposing movement, the entire beneficial effect of the exercise is lost.

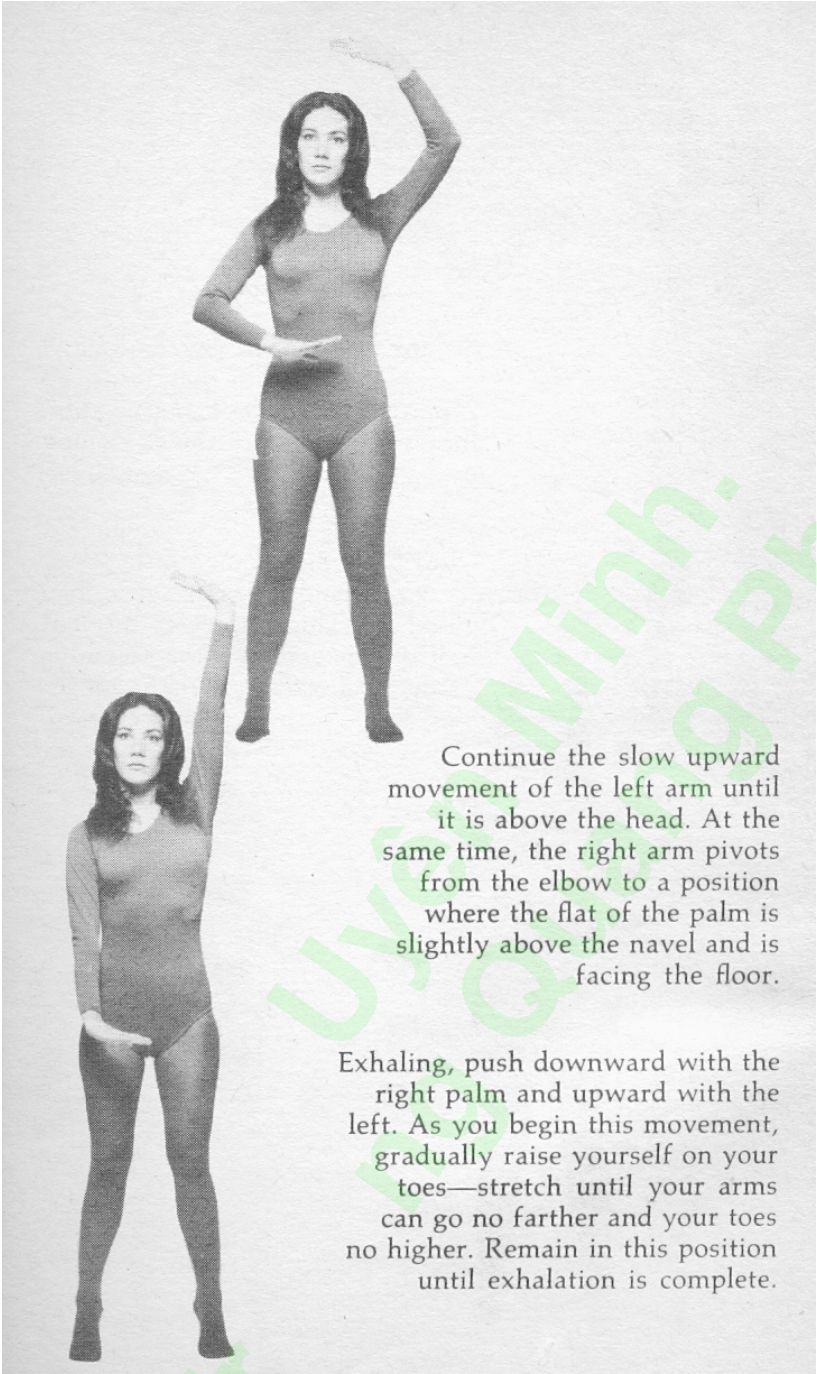
Ancient Kung Fu masters were very precise about the life-giving effects of this exercise. Its major purpose is to stimulate and strengthen the entire digestive system, with particular emphasis on the blood cleansing organs - the liver and the kidneys. Also exercised are the stomach, the small intestines, and the large intestines. You can almost feel it work. When your hands are pushing in opposite directions there is a gentle internal pressure that tugs on the organs mentioned. If you do not experience that sensation, your coordination is off and you are not performing the exercise properly.





Stand erect, spine straight, hands held loosely at the sides, feet spaced comfortably.

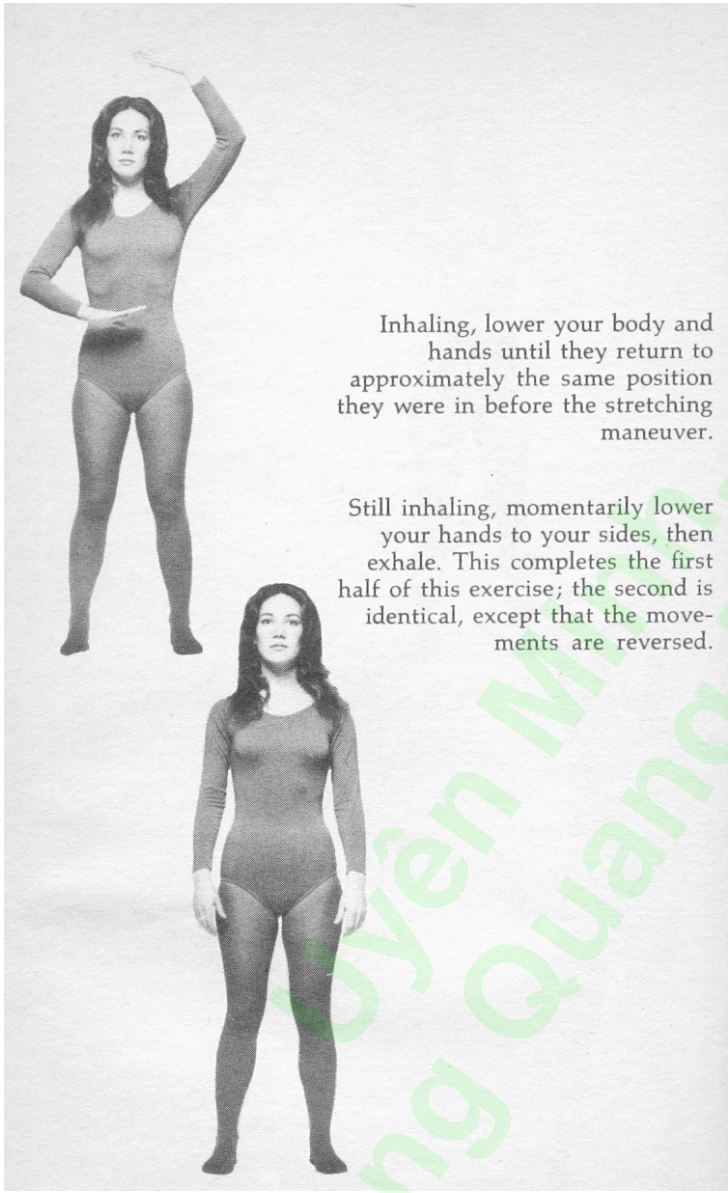
Inhaling, gradually raise your left arm until it is shoulder high and your palm is facing skyward. Simultaneously, bring your right arm out and away from your side, the palm facing toward the body.



Continue the slow upward movement of the left arm until it is above the head. At the same time, the right arm pivots from the elbow to a position where the flat of the palm is slightly above the navel and is facing the floor.

Exhaling, push downward with the right palm and upward with the left. As you begin this movement, gradually raise yourself on your toes—stretch until your arms can go no farther and your toes no higher. Remain in this position until exhalation is complete.

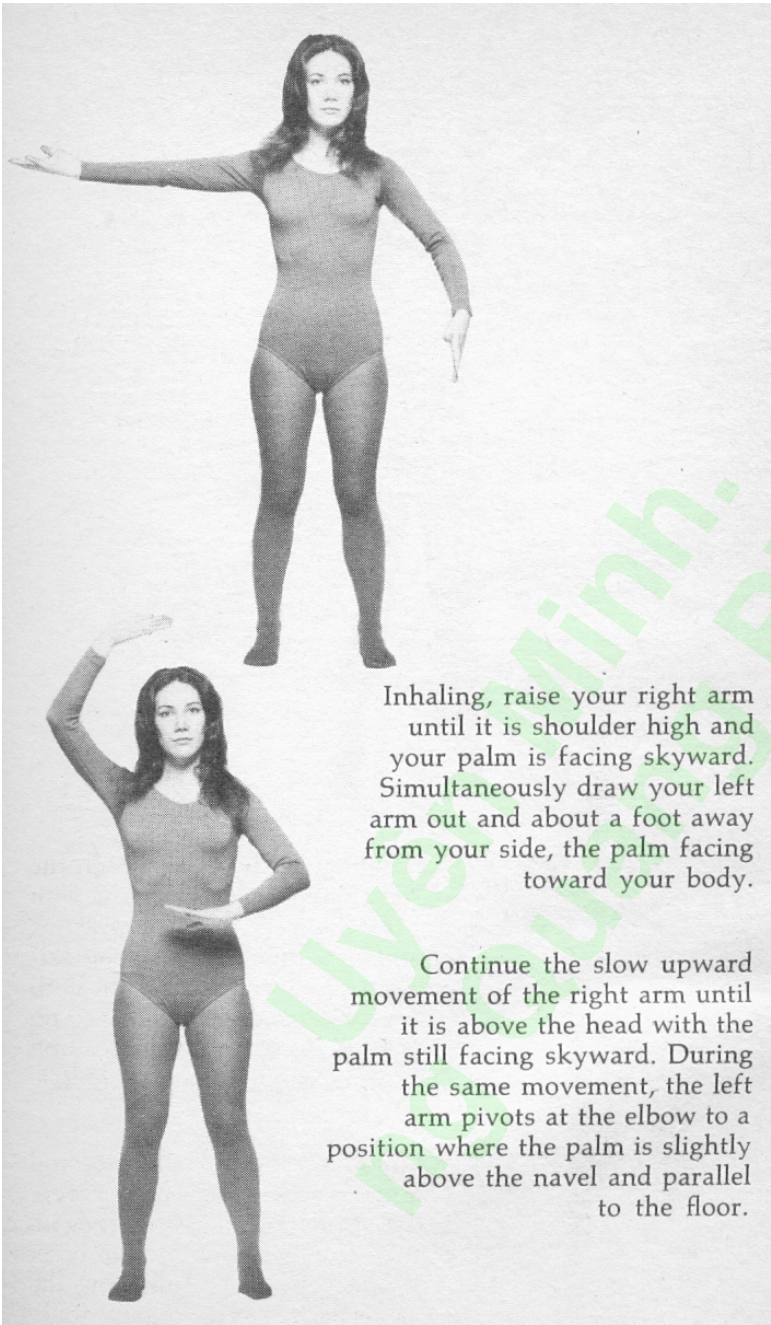




Inhaling, lower your body and hands until they return to approximately the same position they were in before the stretching maneuver.

Still inhaling, momentarily lower your hands to your sides, then exhale. This completes the first half of this exercise; the second is identical, except that the movements are reversed.



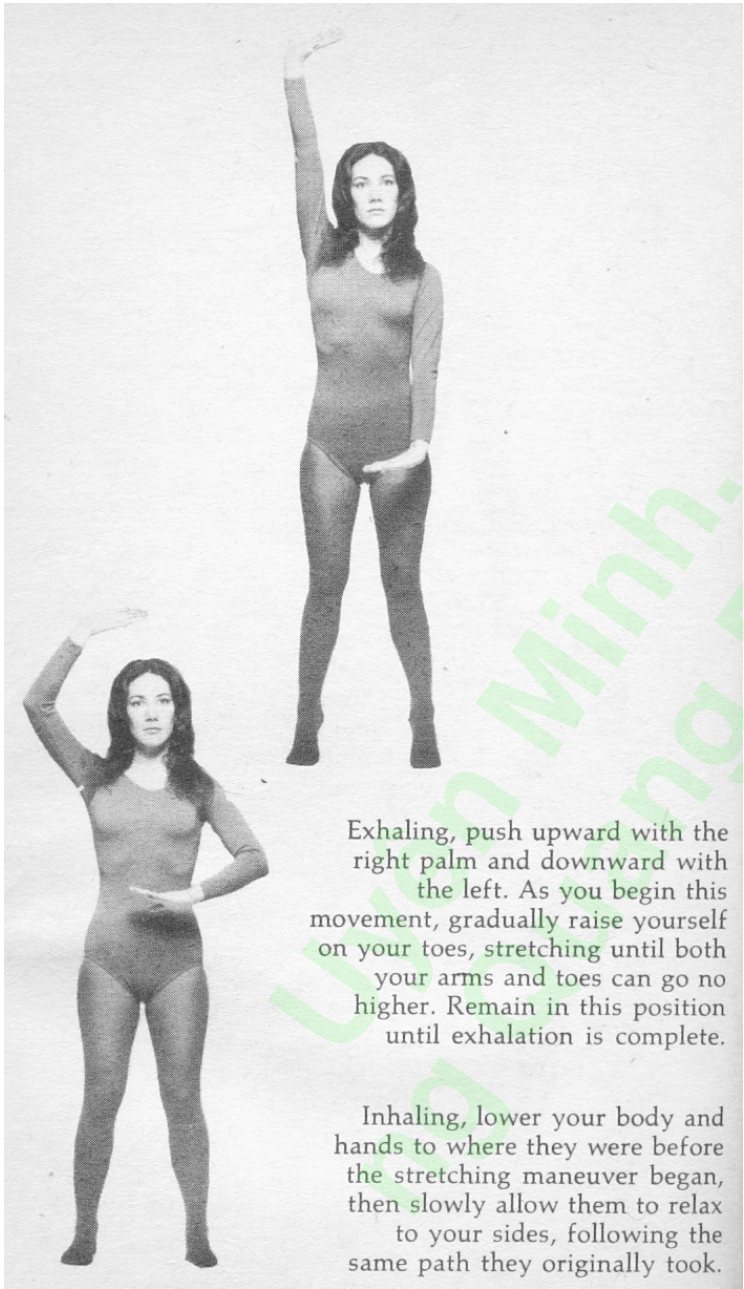


Inhaling, raise your right arm until it is shoulder high and your palm is facing skyward. Simultaneously draw your left arm out and about a foot away from your side, the palm facing toward your body.

Continue the slow upward movement of the right arm until it is above the head with the palm still facing skyward. During the same movement, the left arm pivots at the elbow to a position where the palm is slightly above the navel and parallel to the floor.



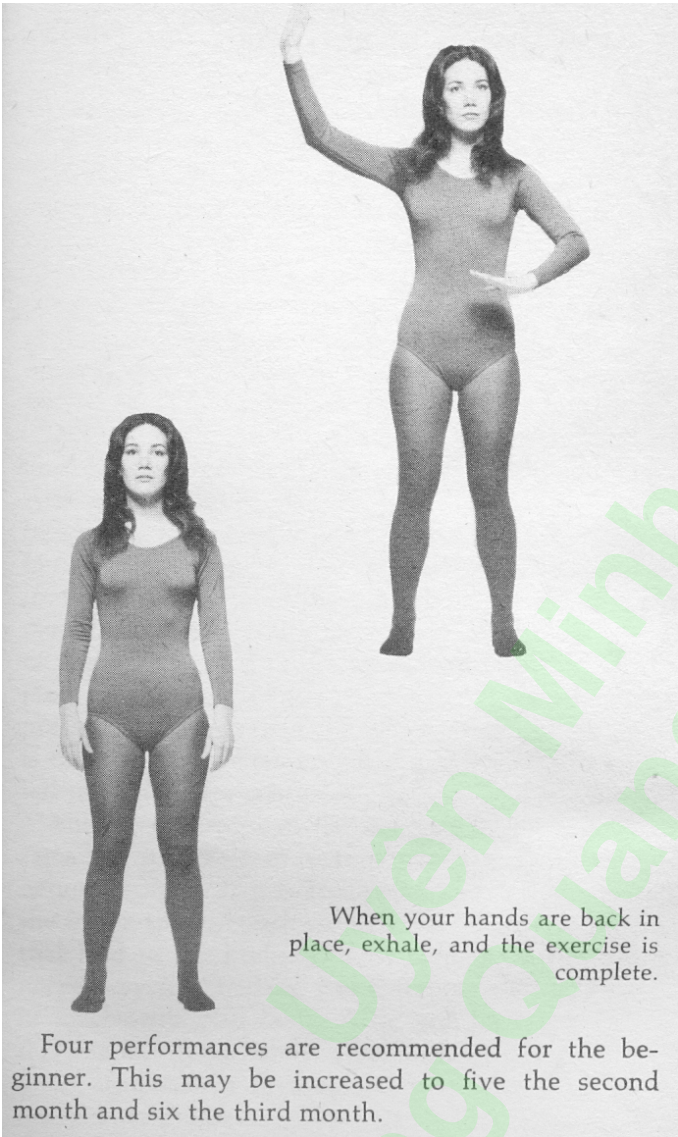




Exhaling, push upward with the right palm and downward with the left. As you begin this movement, gradually raise yourself on your toes, stretching until both your arms and toes can go no higher. Remain in this position until exhalation is complete.

Inhaling, lower your body and hands to where they were before the stretching maneuver began, then slowly allow them to relax to your sides, following the same path they originally took.





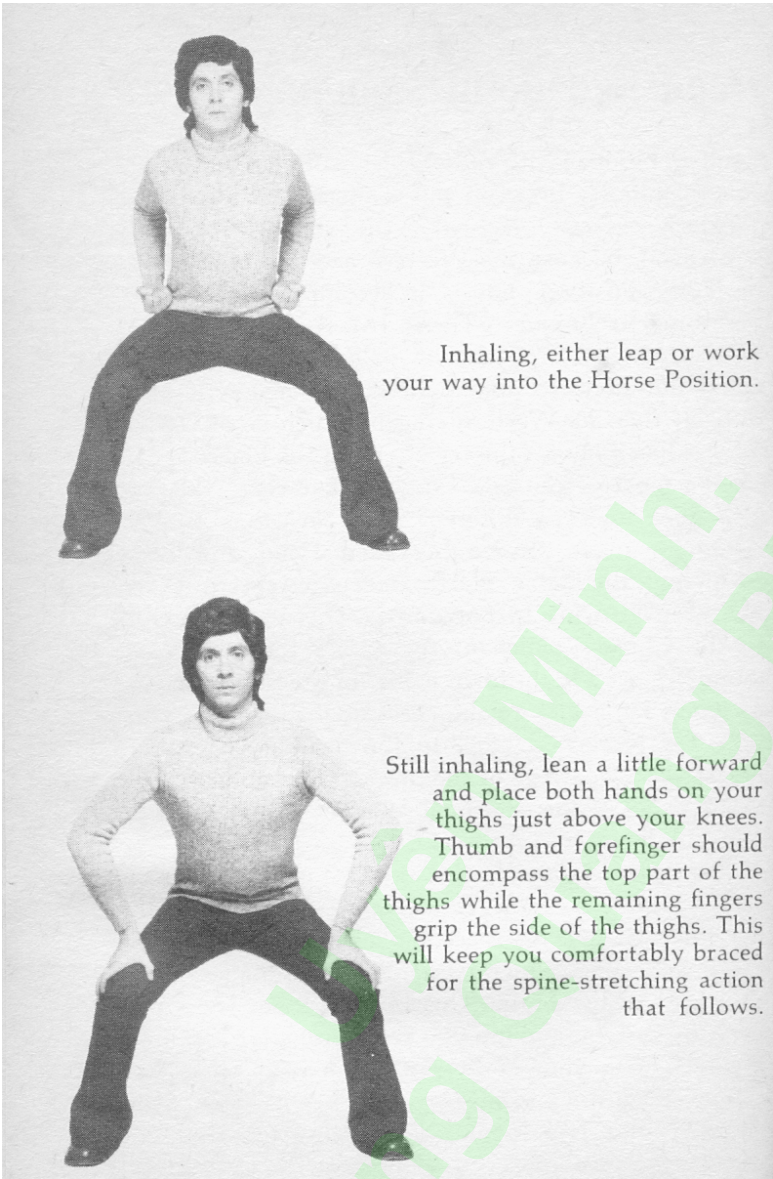
## Head and Body Swinging

Readers familiar with calisthenics will no doubt notice some similarity between this exercise and a common Western exercise. Actually, the similarity is only superficial, because the Western exercise is not done in Horse Position, nor is it accompanied by deep breathing techniques. These two factors give this exercise an efficacy that its pallid Western version could not hope to approach. It also makes it more difficult than its Western cousin, which is, of course, why it has a more salutary effect on the body.

Like most of the Silk-Weaving Exercises, this one also goes under a different name in other schools. Although most commonly called Head and Body Swinging, the name Black Tiger Straightens Waist has been growing in popularity. This is attributable to the Chinese penchant for giving the most commonplace act a high-flown name. In the martial aspect of Kung Fu, a kick to the chest might be called Dipping for Nectar; a blow to the head might be expressed as Departure of the Stork. This sophistication is the result of the continual refinement that Kung Fu has undergone for centuries.

The basic purpose of this exercise is also much the same as its Western counterpart - stimulating the nervous system. This is accomplished by manipulating the lower spine, which contains all the major nerves that lead to the brain. This in turn tones the entire nervous system, making you feel more alert and more in touch with your body. After you have performed this exercise for a while, your back will crack while doing it; this is a favorable sign that indicates you are making progress.

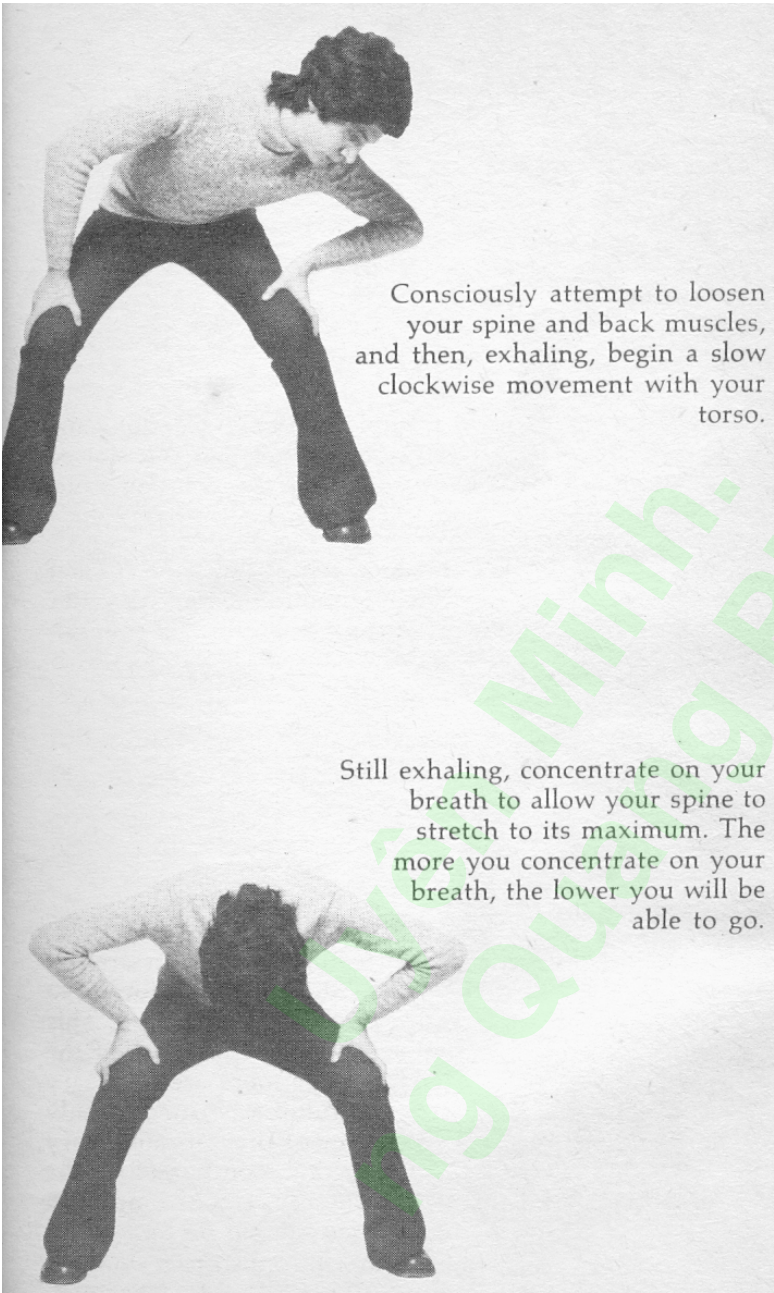




Inhaling, either leap or work your way into the Horse Position.

Still inhaling, lean a little forward and place both hands on your thighs just above your knees. Thumb and forefinger should encompass the top part of the thighs while the remaining fingers grip the side of the thighs. This will keep you comfortably braced for the spine-stretching action that follows.



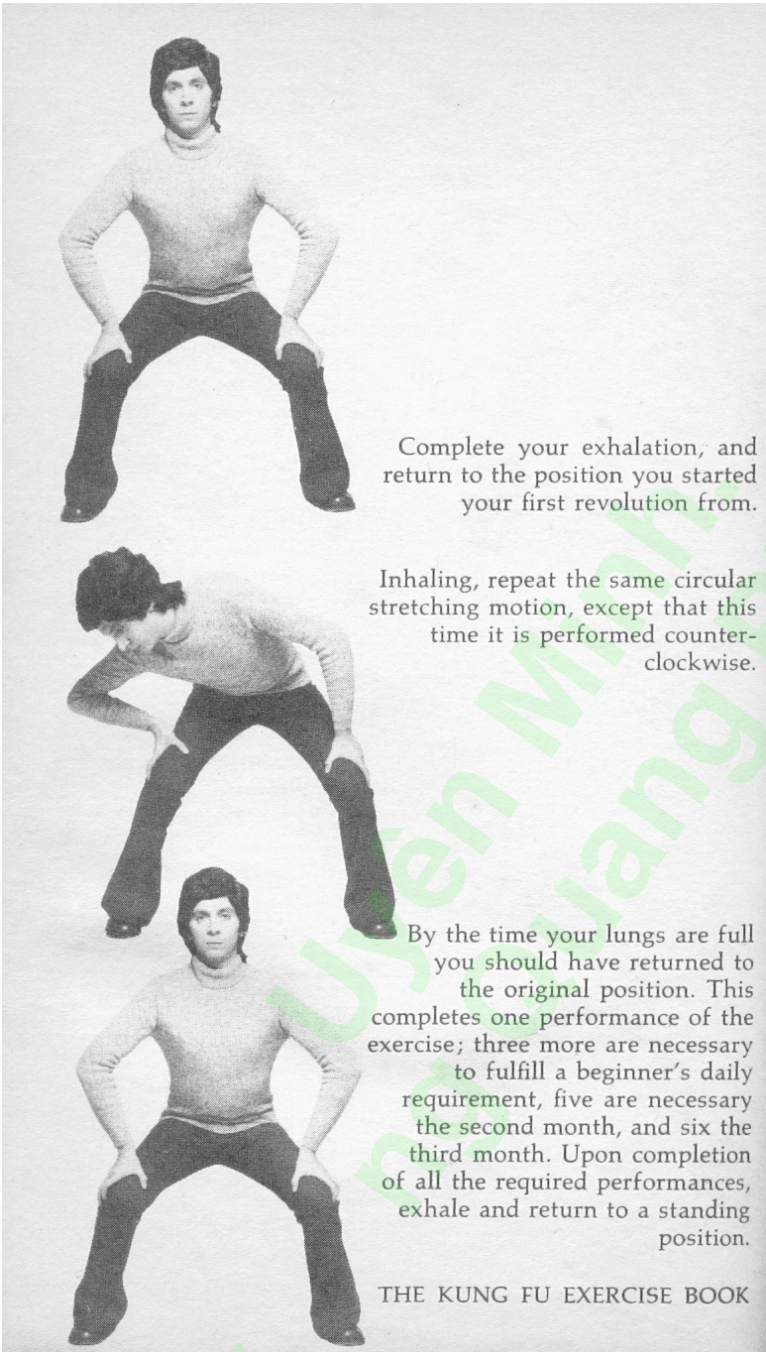


Consciously attempt to loosen your spine and back muscles, and then, exhaling, begin a slow clockwise movement with your torso.

Still exhaling, concentrate on your breath to allow your spine to stretch to its maximum. The more you concentrate on your breath, the lower you will be able to go.







## Bending

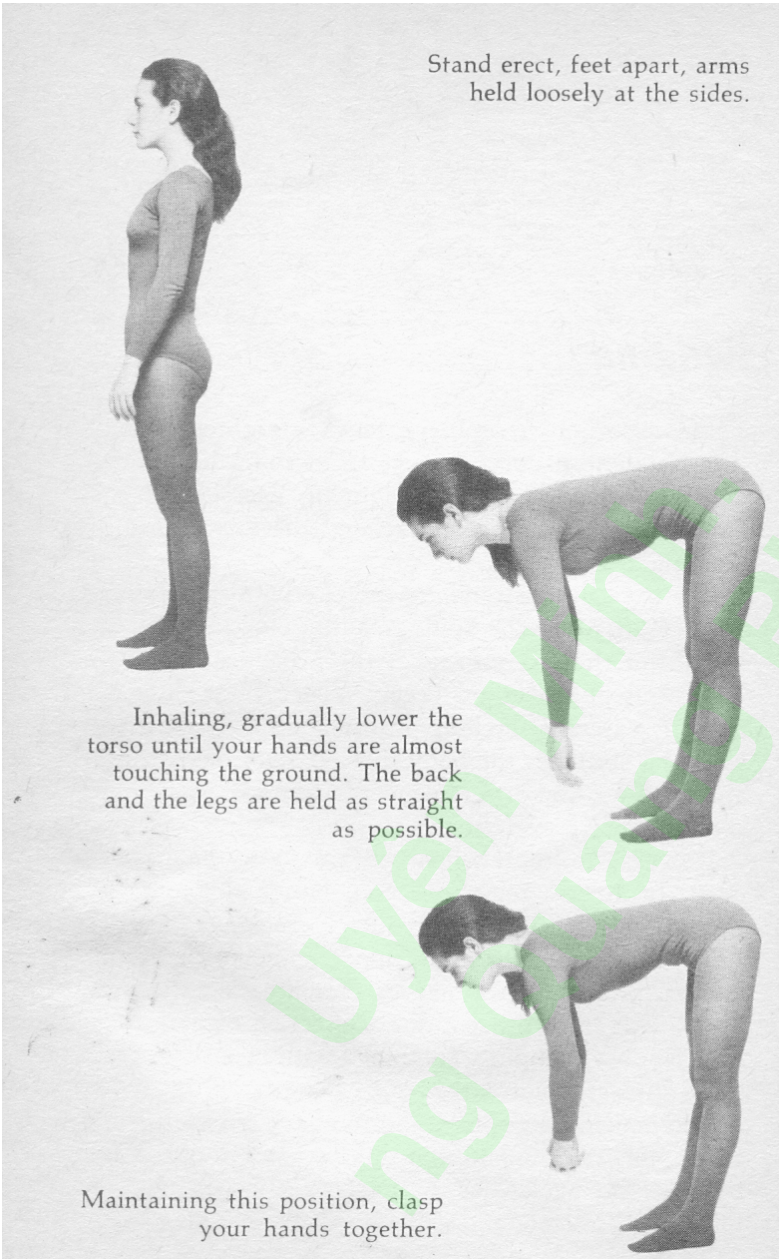
This is also known as Black Tiger Straightens Waist. It is frequently found in early Chinese medical books under the heading "Life-prolonging Exercise." Kung Fu masters have long appreciated the importance of Bending.

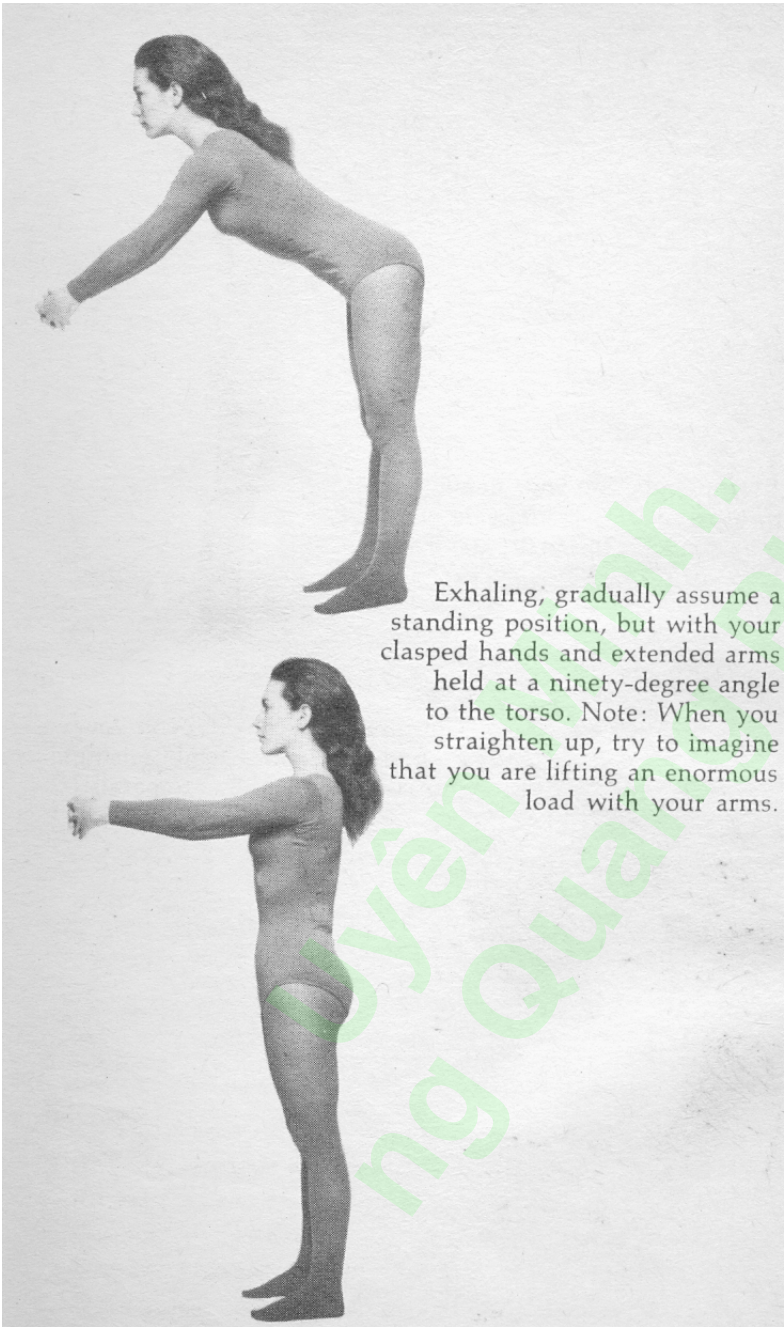
It is basically a stretching exercise with the primary area of attention the spine, making it akin to Hatha Yoga. But this exercise takes the principles of Hatha Yoga and improves on them. Where Yoga puts the body in a spine-stretching position and leaves it there, Kung Fu stretches the body through continual motion and adds leg and arm movements to make for a more comprehensive exercise.

It is easy to know when you are doing the exercise properly, for as you shoot your hands skyward you should feel the joints in your back cracking.

The exercise causes the upper spine to be stimulated, working on the nerves that are closest to the brain. This in turn has a direct effect on mental mood and memory. Bending, combined with Head and Body Swinging, stimulates the entire length of the spine. It also benefits the spleen and the back muscles. Kung Fu masters recommend that this exercise be performed by itself for backaches, neck aches, pains in the hips, mental depression, and general nervousness.

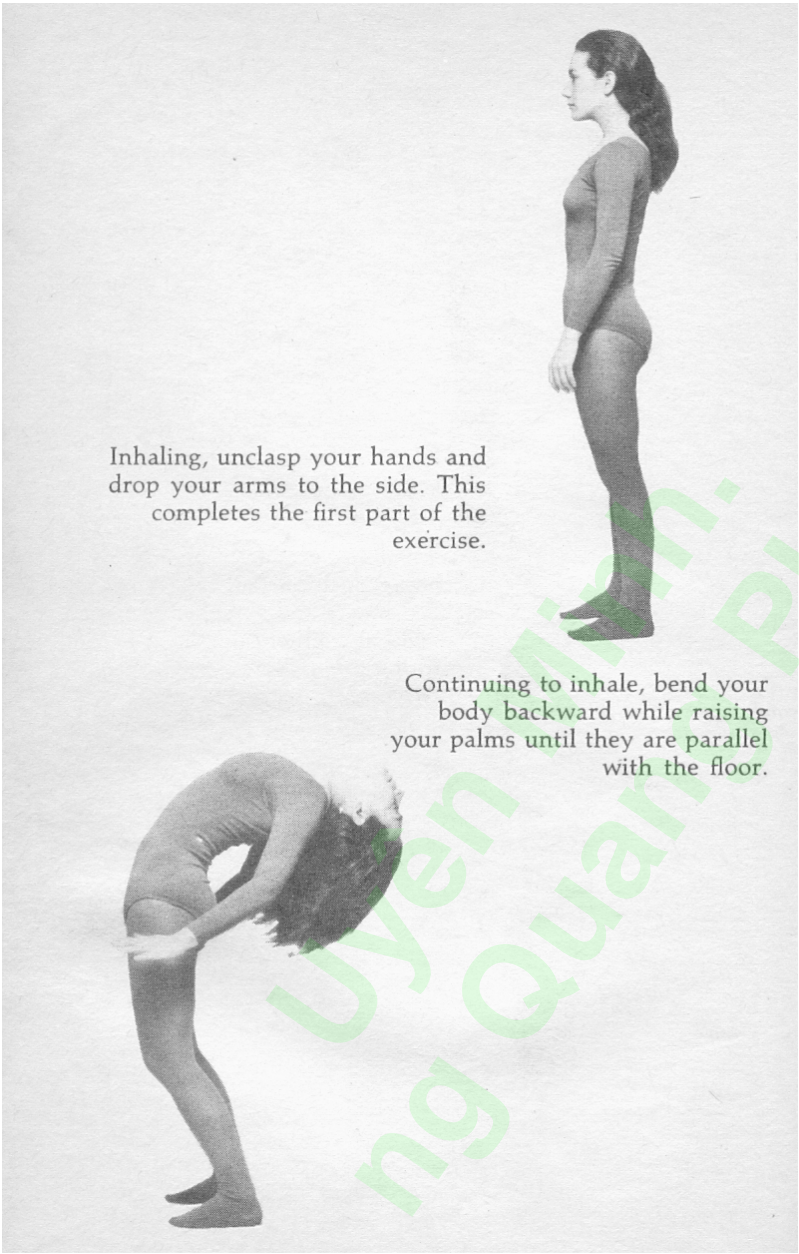






Exhaling, gradually assume a standing position, but with your clasped hands and extended arms held at a ninety-degree angle to the torso. Note: When you straighten up, try to imagine that you are lifting an enormous load with your arms.

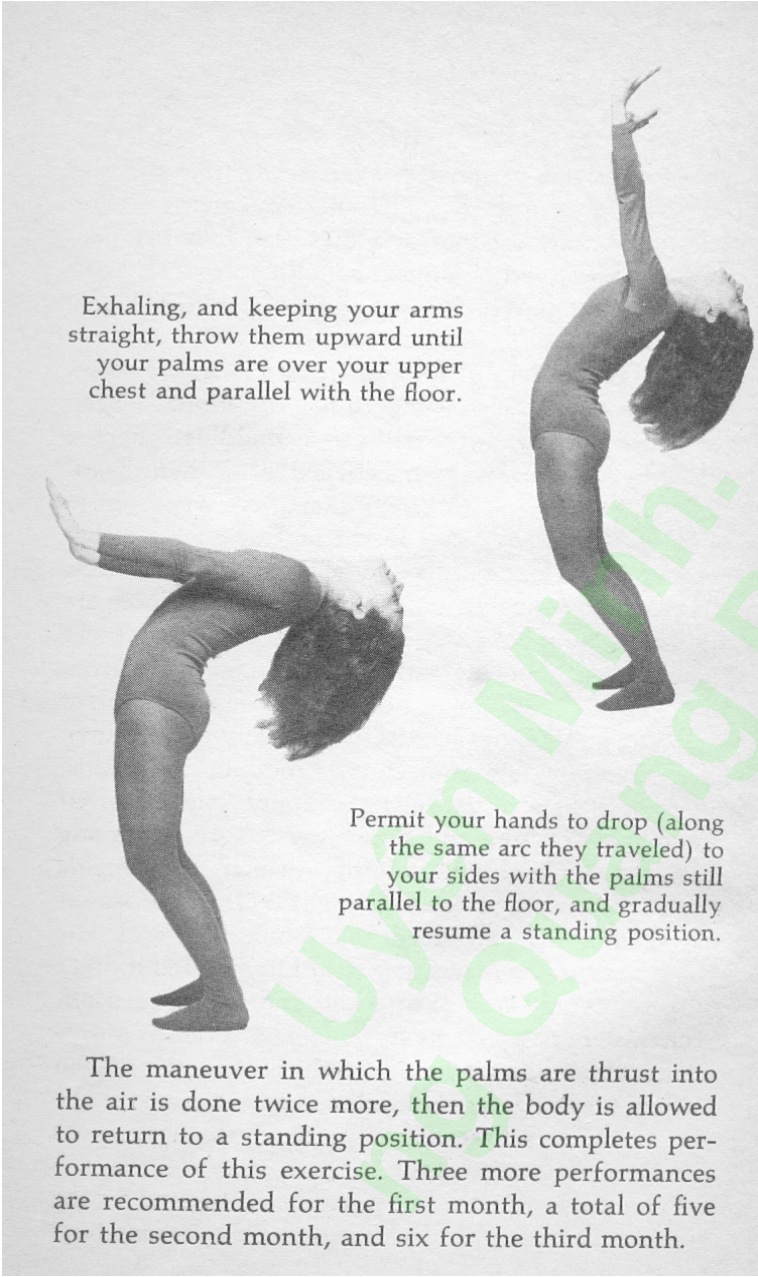




Inhaling, unclasp your hands and drop your arms to the side. This completes the first part of the exercise.

Continuing to inhale, bend your body backward while raising your palms until they are parallel with the floor.





## Punching

Punching is one of the few exercises of this set that has a distinctly martial slant. The movements, as the title implies, are a series of blows. Yet they are performed slowly, with almost ballet like control, with little striking power behind them, from the Horse Position.

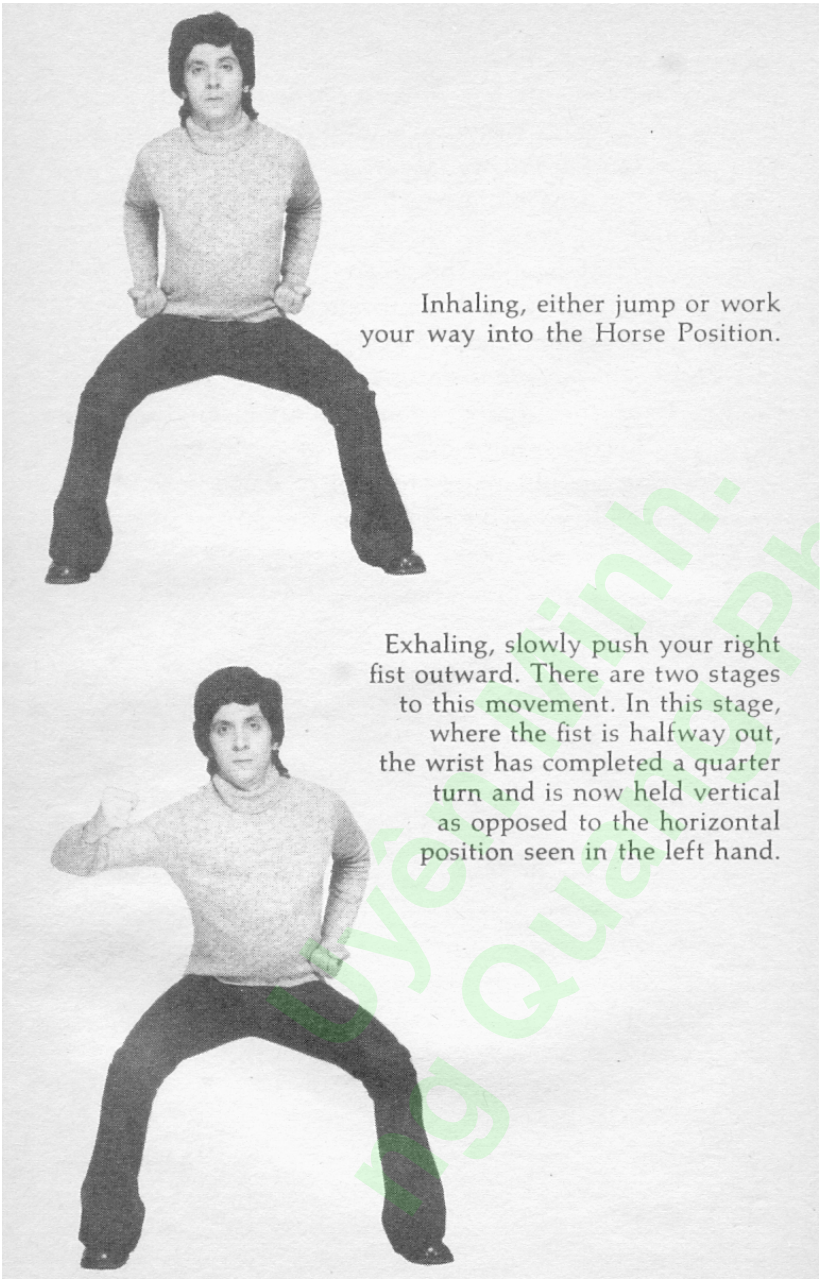
Kung Fu masters include this exercise in the series for two reasons. First, Kung Fu has traditionally been used for martial purposes. Even Buddhist monks, once their bodies were toughened after months of practicing the Silk-Weaving Exercises, went on to learn the more advanced forms of Kung Fu. At that stage of development, sparring was commonplace. Many of the forms invented through the centuries are the work of monks tired of being bested in these matches. A brief digression illustrates the martial effect on the development of the art. The founder of the Praying Mantis School had always been beaten by everyone at his monastery. Brooding about this, he took a long walk into the countryside. He sat down under a tree and happened to spy a praying mantis grappling with another insect. The mantis, easily overpowered his opponent with a series of movements that intrigued the monk. He took the insect back to the monastery with him and fed it other insects to study how it attacked and defended itself. From his observations he formulated a series of movements which he practiced secretly for months. When he was prepared, he challenged the best monk at the monastery and defeated him, much to everyone's surprise.

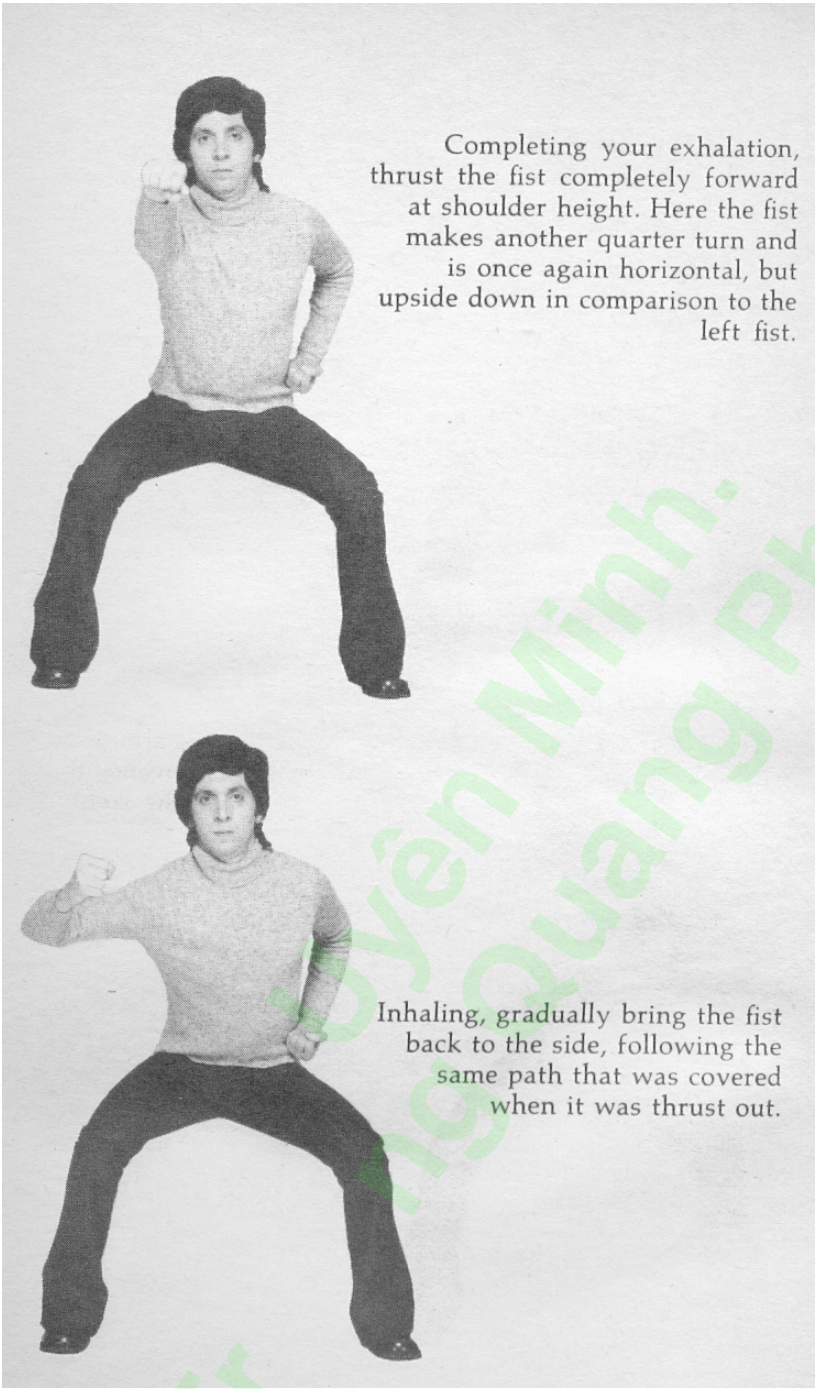
While this exercise is by no means related to the praying-mantis form, it is not difficult to understand the martial connection, and several of the more advanced exercises have a similar slant. Second, this series of movements has proven particularly valuable in raising the Ch'i (internal energy) and directing it. The slow-motion blows are designed to move the Ch'i from the area underneath the navel up the chest and through the arms.

In matters of health, this exercise serves a number of vital functions. It is a comprehensive workout for much of the skeletal muscle system; arms, legs, back, and chest all receive rigorous attention. Internally, the heart and the circulatory system are strengthened.

As you become more proficient at performing this exercise you should begin to feel a warm sensation course through your body; this is the stirring of the Ch'i. Do not be alarmed-continue placidly.





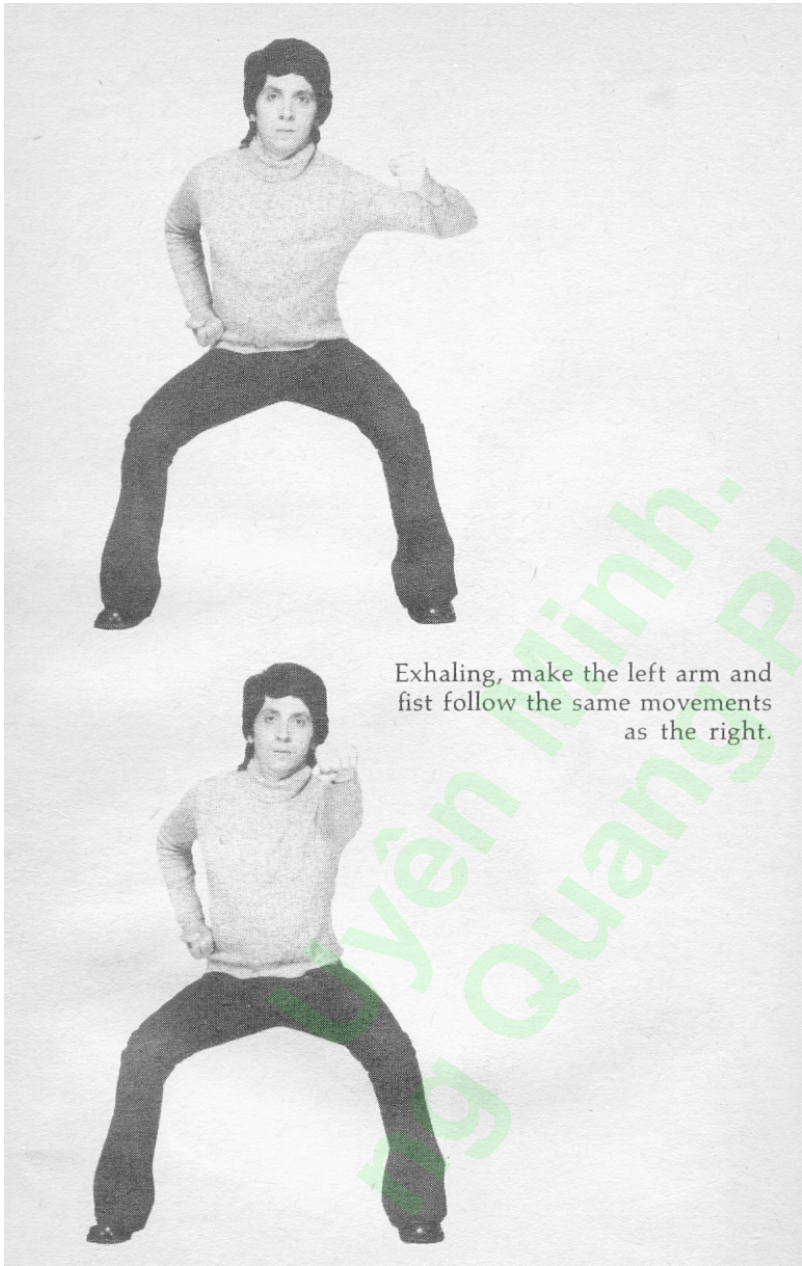


Completing your exhalation, thrust the fist completely forward at shoulder height. Here the fist makes another quarter turn and is once again horizontal, but upside down in comparison to the left fist.

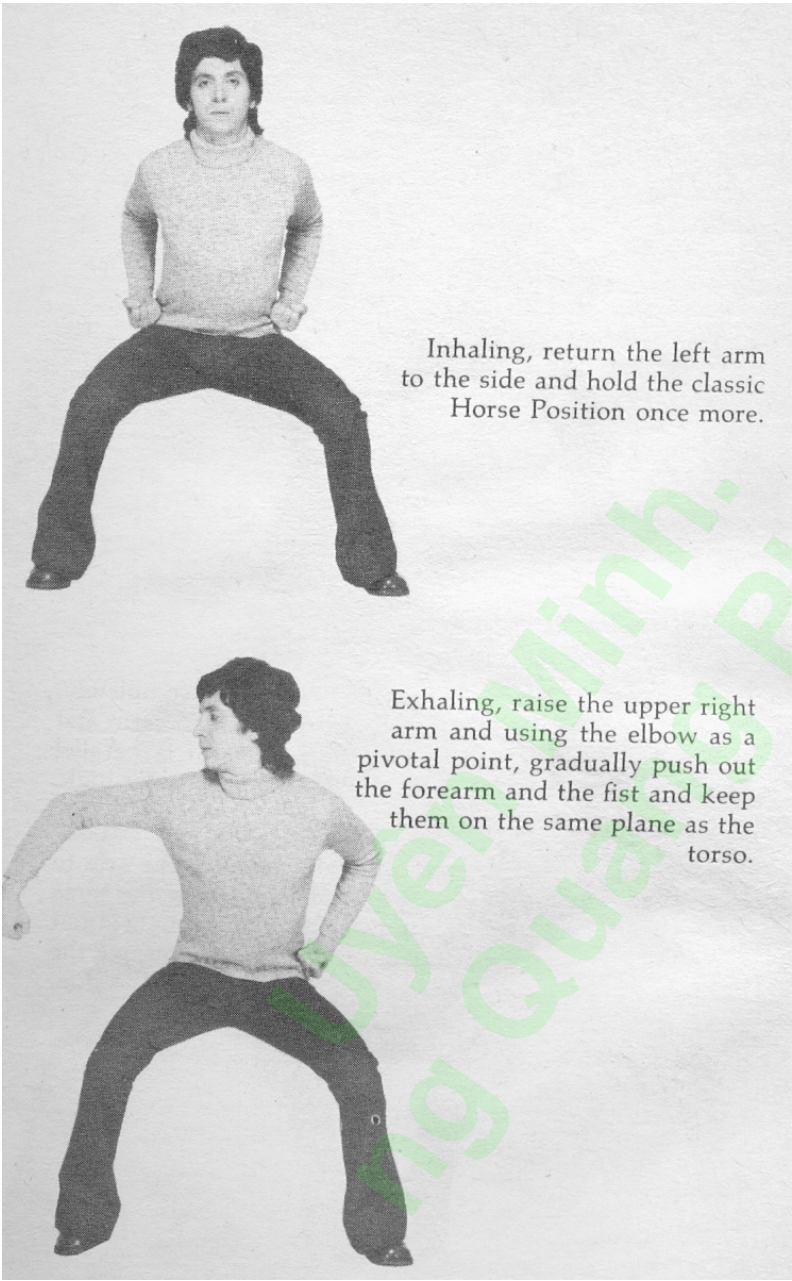
Inhaling, gradually bring the fist back to the side, following the same path that was covered when it was thrust out.

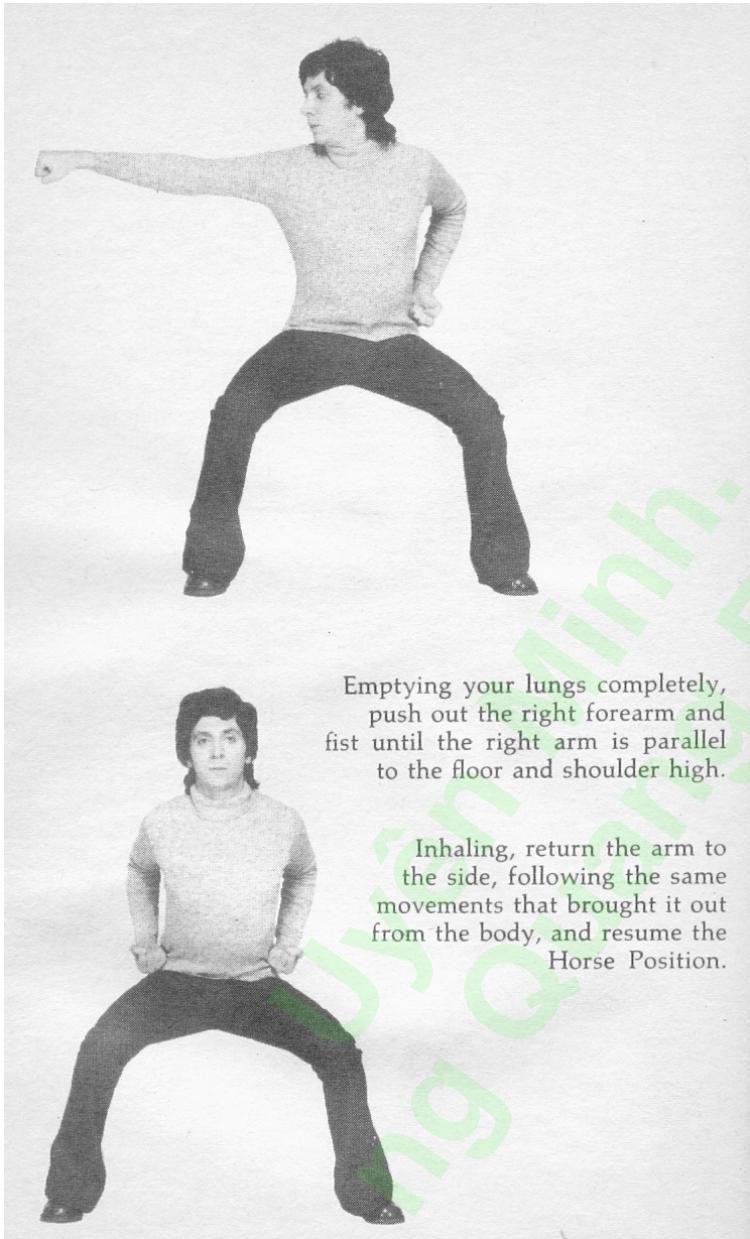


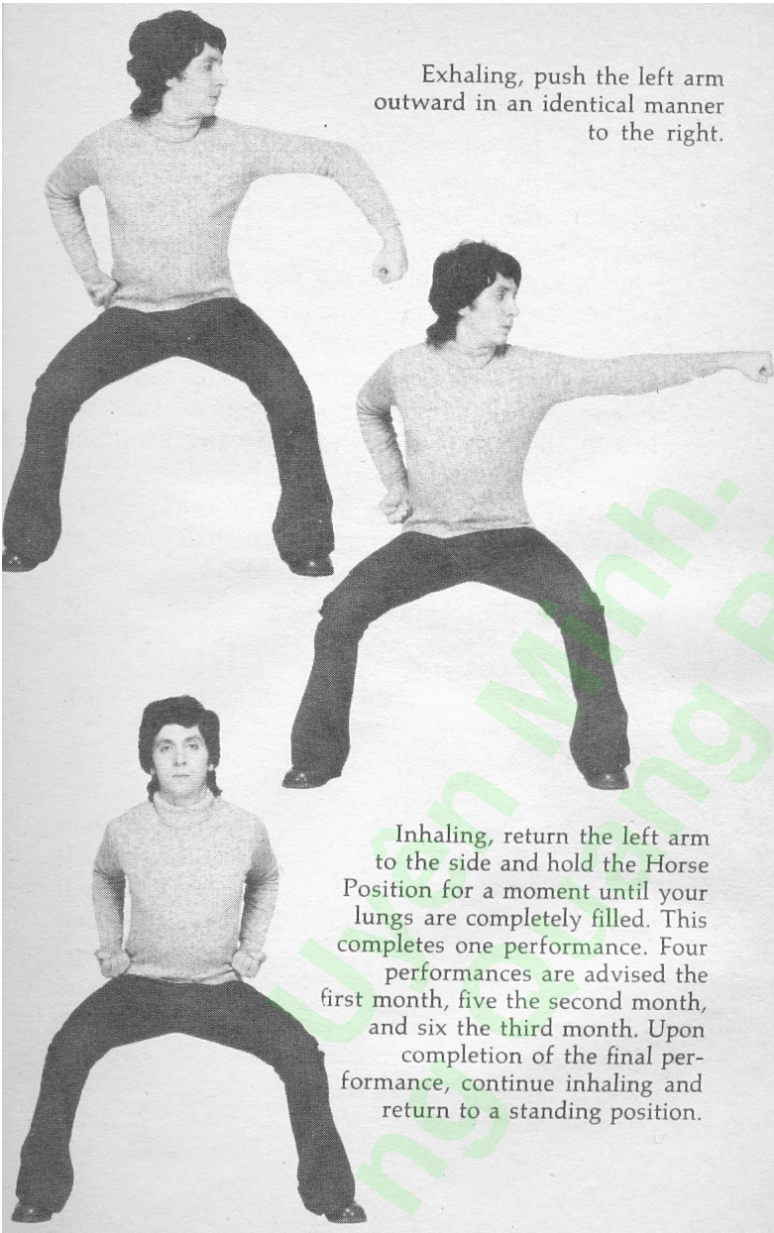












## ADVANCED EXERCISES

The monk Pan Hui once commented: "Exercise which does not involve the entire body is harmful. To overexercise one part initially can be injurious. Therefore, deal with the whole body, then specialize. Even when you accomplish the whole don't neglect it in favor of overspecialization on one part."

Pan Hui's advice demonstrates how this next set of exercises should be approached. The effects of the exercises on the following pages are frequently similar to many of the effects that the beginning exercises have on specific bodily organs. The difference lies in the fact that the exercises in this set are more rigorous, hence will affect an organ more than those in the first set. Following the monk's advice, it is wise not to overstimulate one part at the expense of the other parts of the body. When selecting additional exercises from this section, do so in a balanced fashion so that one area of the body is not given too much attention.

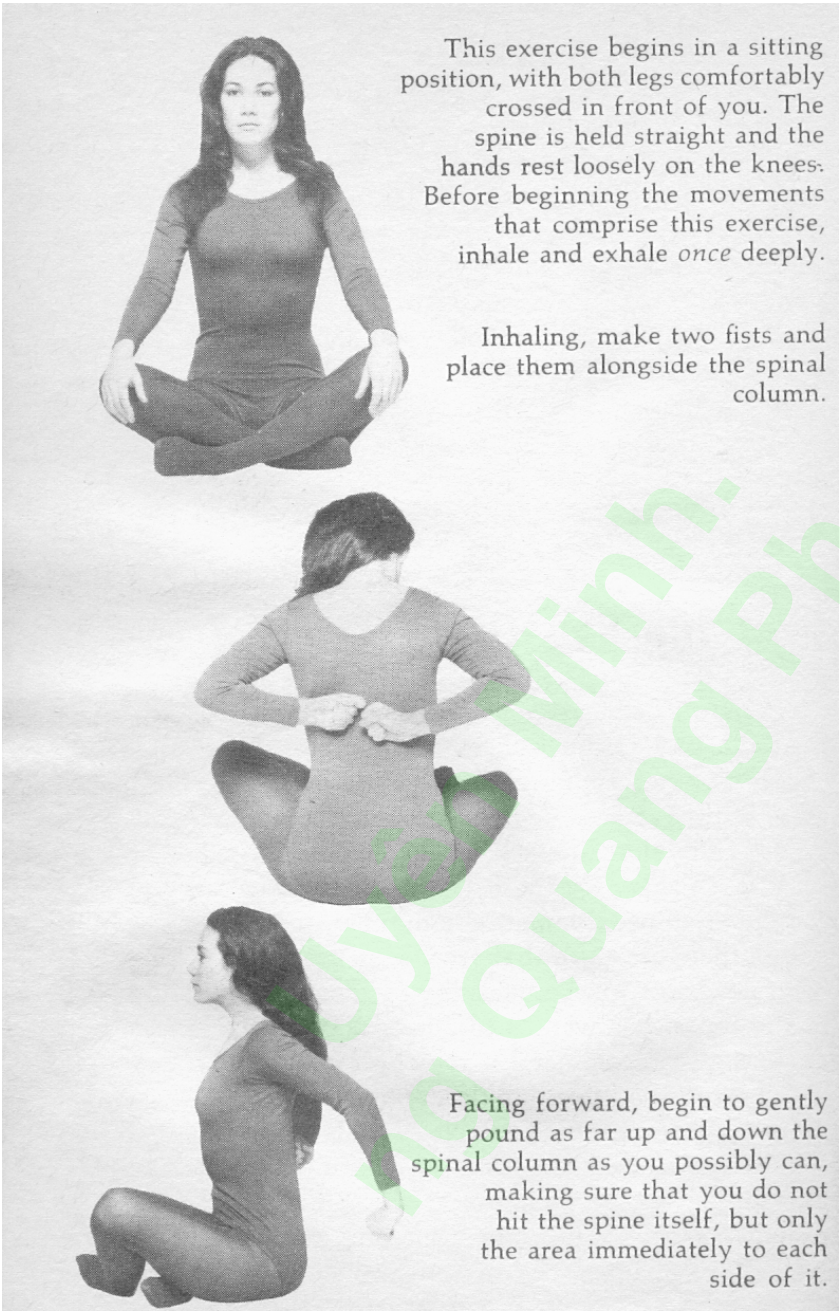
### Beat the Sky Drum

More akin to Chinese massage than Chinese exercise, Beat the Sky Drum utilizes a stimulatory technique called tapping. Tapping is the gentle pounding of an area with varying degrees of force by either the fingers, the side or back of the hand, the palm, or the fist. In this case the fists are used to beat around the upper spine, stimulating a number of acupuncture points that surface in that area. This exercise has long been used in Chinese medicine to remove congestion in the thorax, as well as to alleviate coughs. Chinese doctors also recommend it for chest pain, backaches, and pain in the knees, ankles, and coccyx.

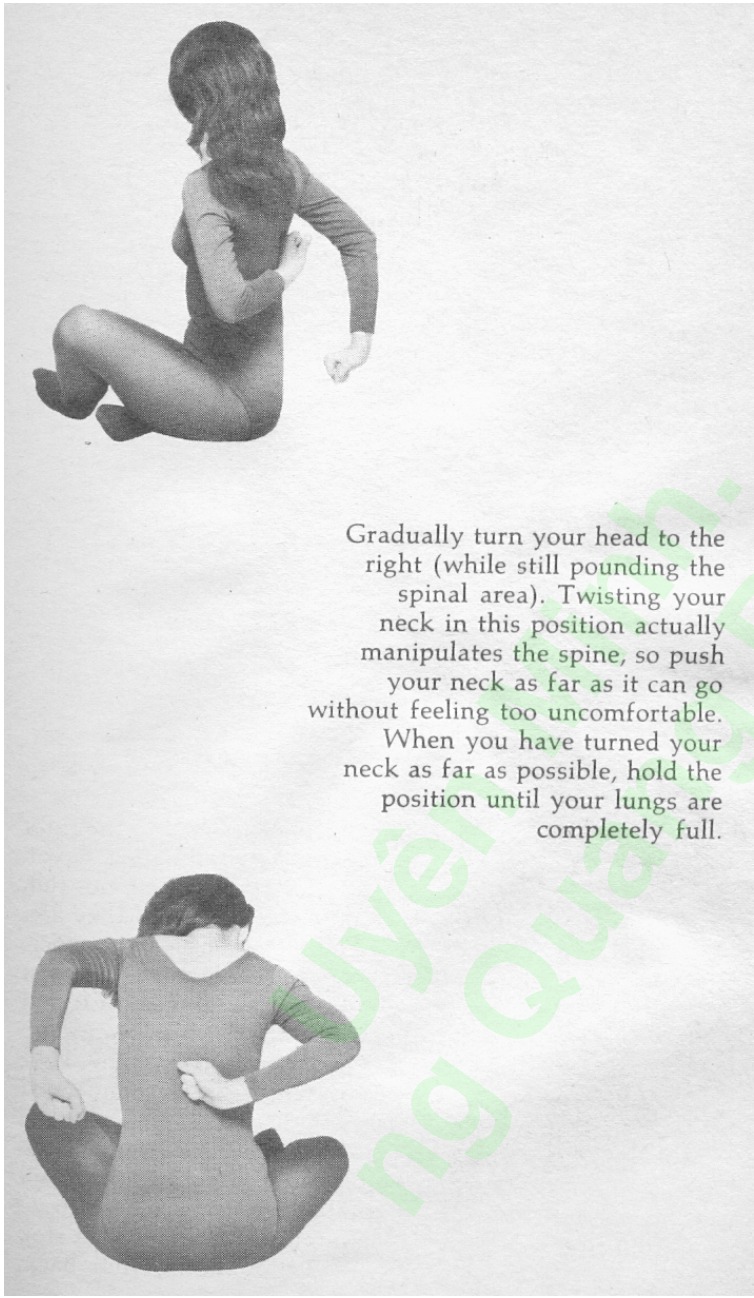
Its more long-range effects include strengthening the back and neck muscles, stimulating the bladder, and toning up the pancreas. You are performing the exercise properly if your back and neck are more relaxed upon completion.



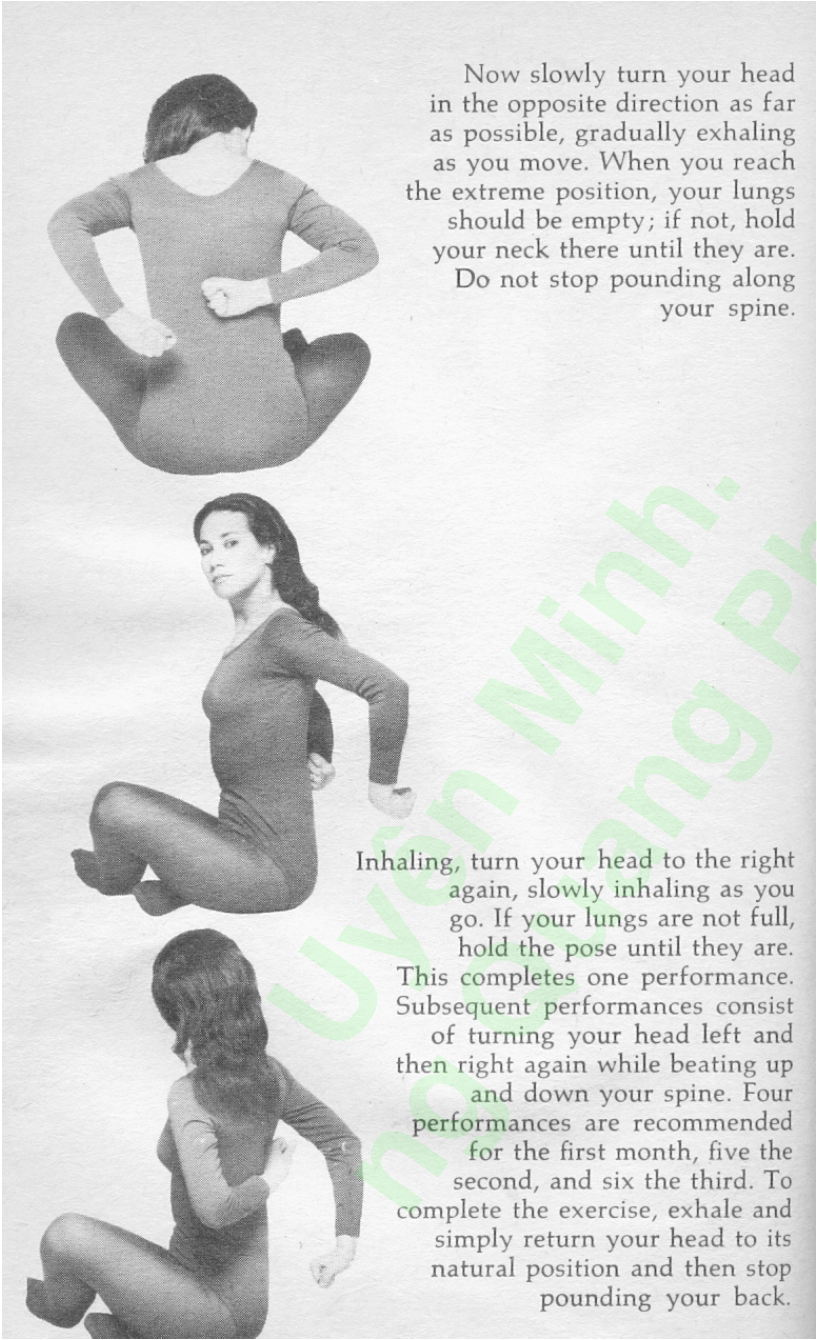








Gradually turn your head to the right (while still pounding the spinal area). Twisting your neck in this position actually manipulates the spine, so push your neck as far as it can go without feeling too uncomfortable. When you have turned your neck as far as possible, hold the position until your lungs are completely full.

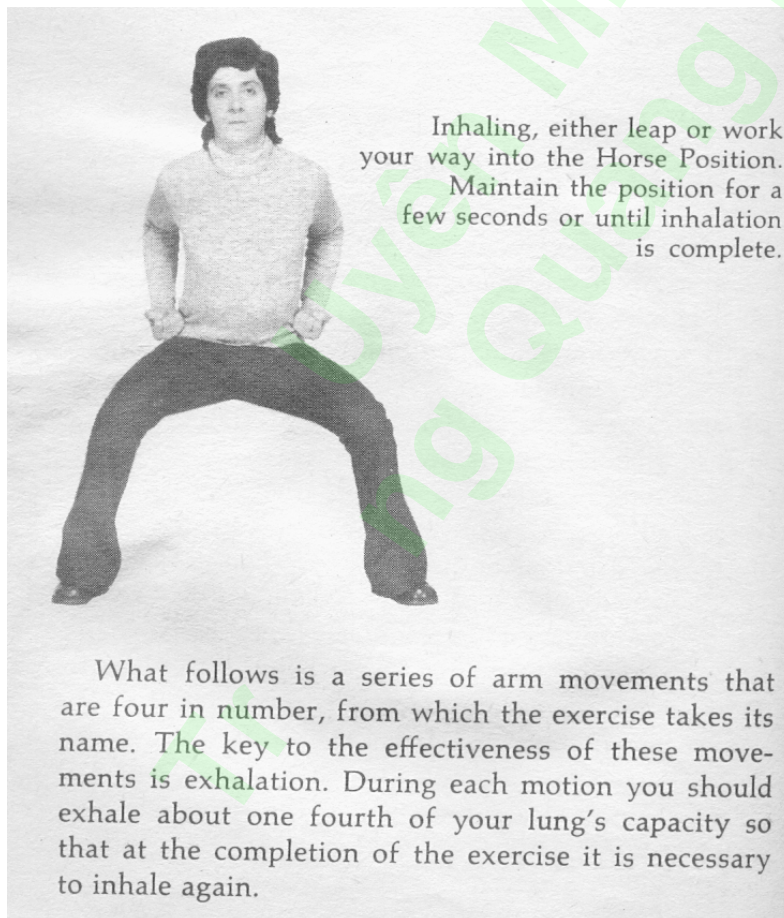


## Four Arm Movements

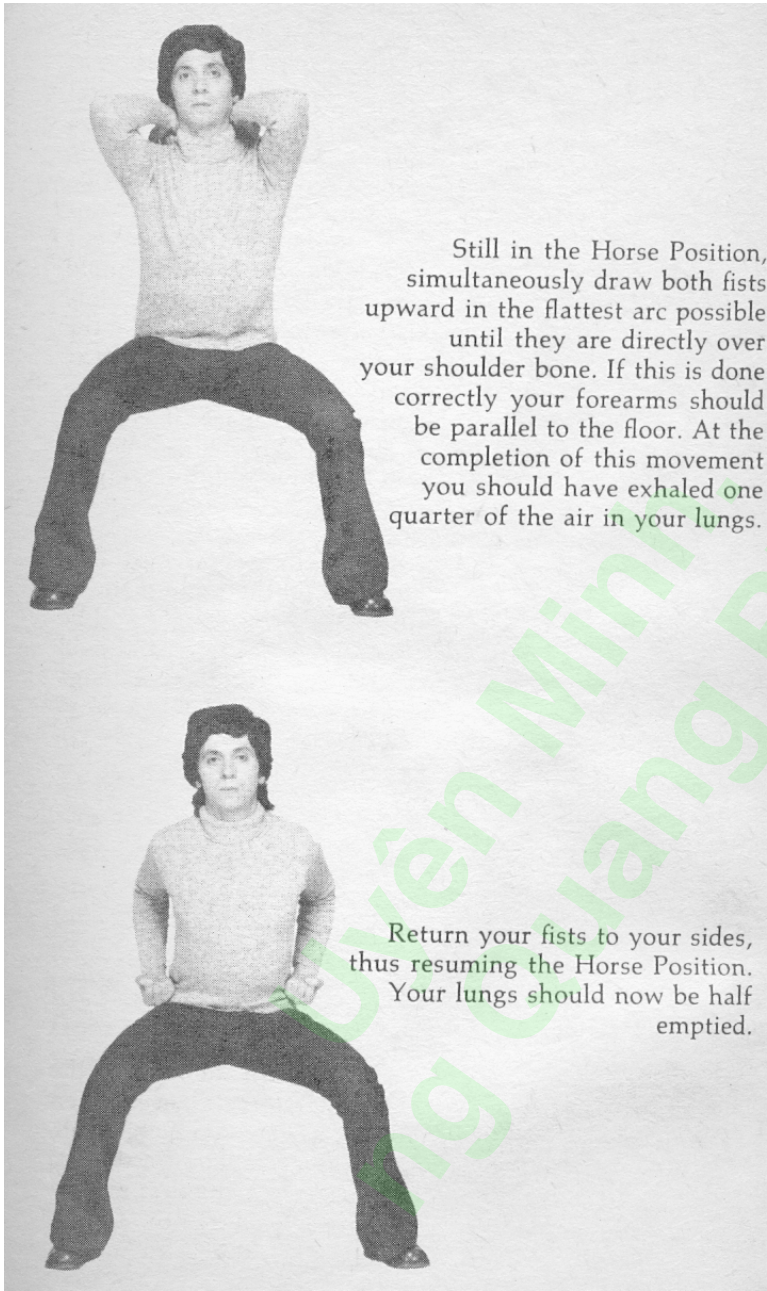
Performed in the Horse Position, this exercise is often found in other schools under the name of Wild Goose Beats Wings. While the exercise may not exactly look like the wing movements a bird would make in flight, there is some similarity.

This exercise differs from most of the preceding ones in that it is more rigorously performed. While the previous exercises have been done slowly, as if the practitioner were pushing against a great weight, this exercise is done at a normal speed, akin to everyday movements. Naturally, the accompanying breathing technique must be similarly speeded up, the rationale behind this most likely being that birds in flight do not move slowly.

The benefits derived from this exercise, besides those that come automatically from maintaining the Horse Position, are stimulation of the lymphatic system, strengthened arm and back muscles, and tonification of the cervical spinal-cord segments.





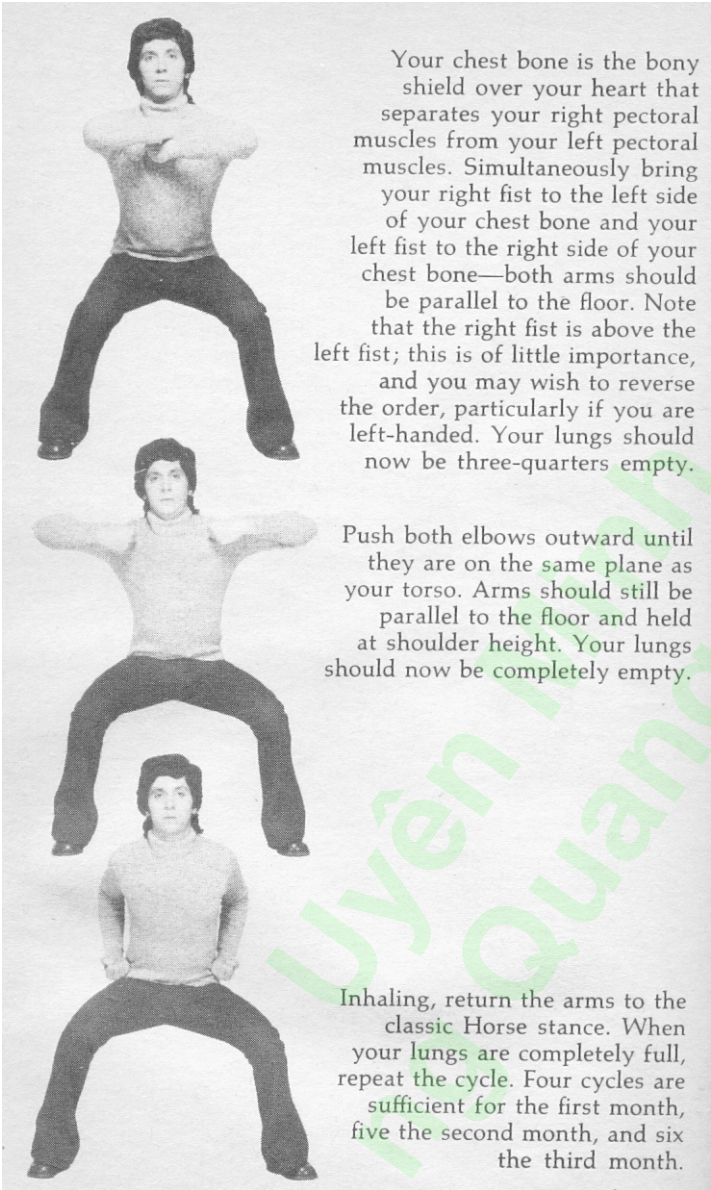


Still in the Horse Position, simultaneously draw both fists upward in the flattest arc possible until they are directly over your shoulder bone. If this is done correctly your forearms should be parallel to the floor. At the completion of this movement you should have exhaled one quarter of the air in your lungs.

Return your fists to your sides, thus resuming the Horse Position. Your lungs should now be half emptied.







Your chest bone is the bony shield over your heart that separates your right pectoral muscles from your left pectoral muscles. Simultaneously bring your right fist to the left side of your chest bone and your left fist to the right side of your chest bone—both arms should be parallel to the floor. Note that the right fist is above the left fist; this is of little importance, and you may wish to reverse the order, particularly if you are left-handed. Your lungs should now be three-quarters empty.

Push both elbows outward until they are on the same plane as your torso. Arms should still be parallel to the floor and held at shoulder height. Your lungs should now be completely empty.

Inhaling, return the arms to the classic Horse stance. When your lungs are completely full, repeat the cycle. Four cycles are sufficient for the first month, five the second month, and six the third month.



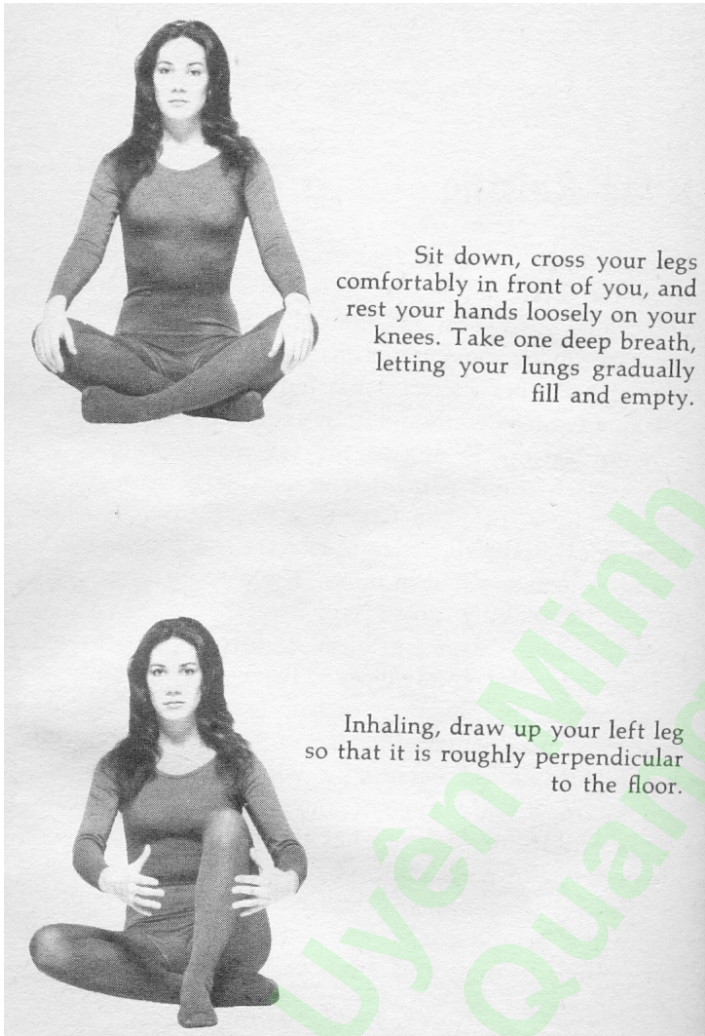
## Knee Raising

Initially many people feel that this cannot be an advanced exercise because it is not strenuous and is performed sitting on the floor. Do not be misled by the ease of the movements. Knee Raising has a number of valuable physical attributes, but essentially it's an advanced contemplation exercise.

Knee Raising is one of the few exercises that at first is downright painful, and peculiarly so at that. It basically affects the fingers, a notoriously delicate anatomical spot. But that is exactly the purpose the Kung Fu masters had in mind. Their pupils, they felt, would be making progress when they could transcend, through concentration and total absorption, intense physical annoyances. This was accomplished by complete involvement in the deep-breathing process. The man who could concentrate completely on his breath would eventually win absolute freedom from pain. It is this type of concentration that enables India's fakirs to stick needles through their arms and lie on a bed of nails, etc.

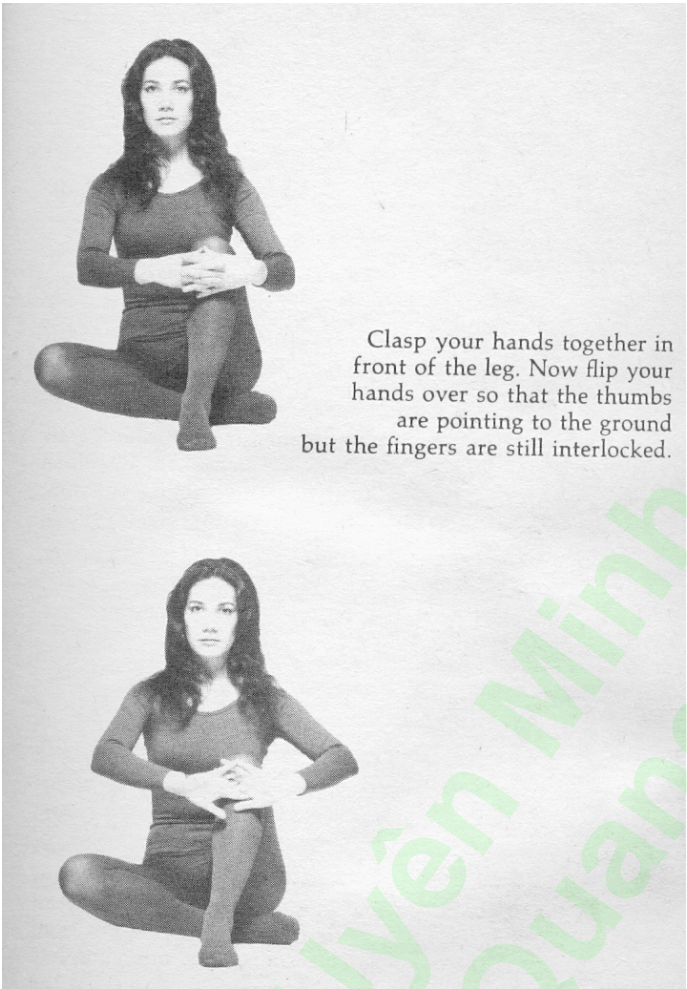
Medical uses of this exercise are to relieve pain in the arms, armpits, legs, and wrists and to overcome emotional disquiet and anxiety. Internally, the exercise is meant to strengthen genitalia and improve pancreatic function.



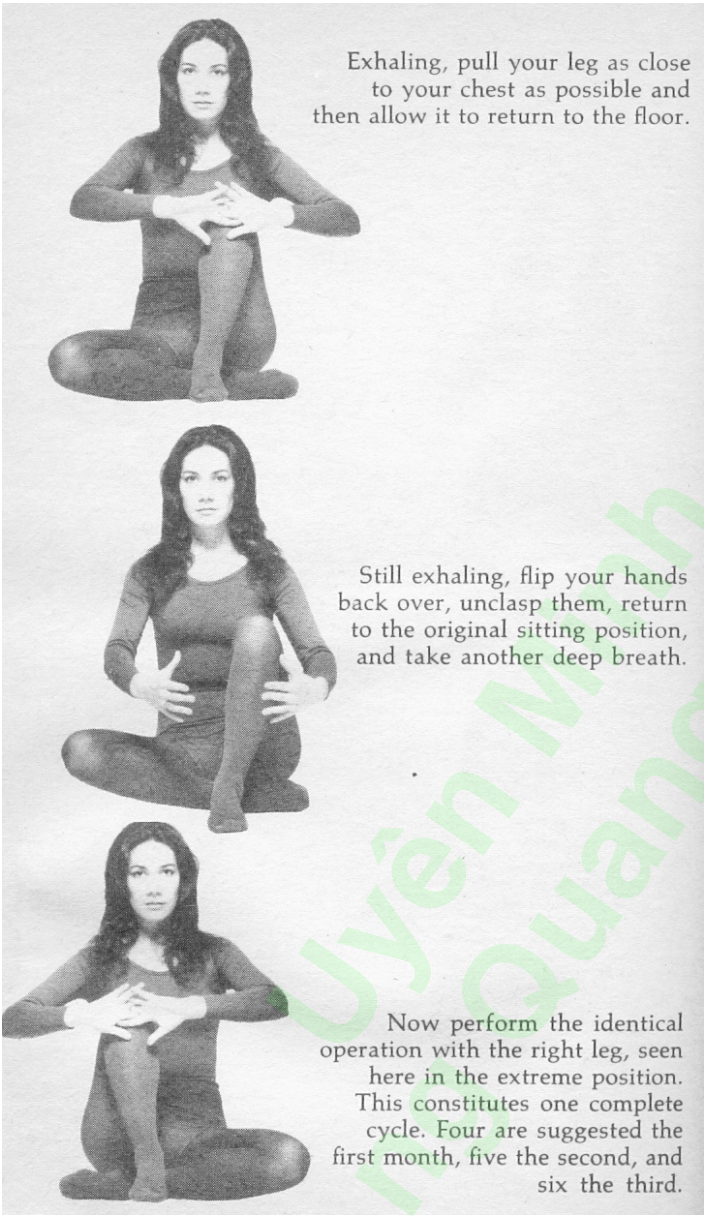


Sit down, cross your legs comfortably in front of you, and rest your hands loosely on your knees. Take one deep breath, letting your lungs gradually fill and empty.

Inhaling, draw up your left leg so that it is roughly perpendicular to the floor.







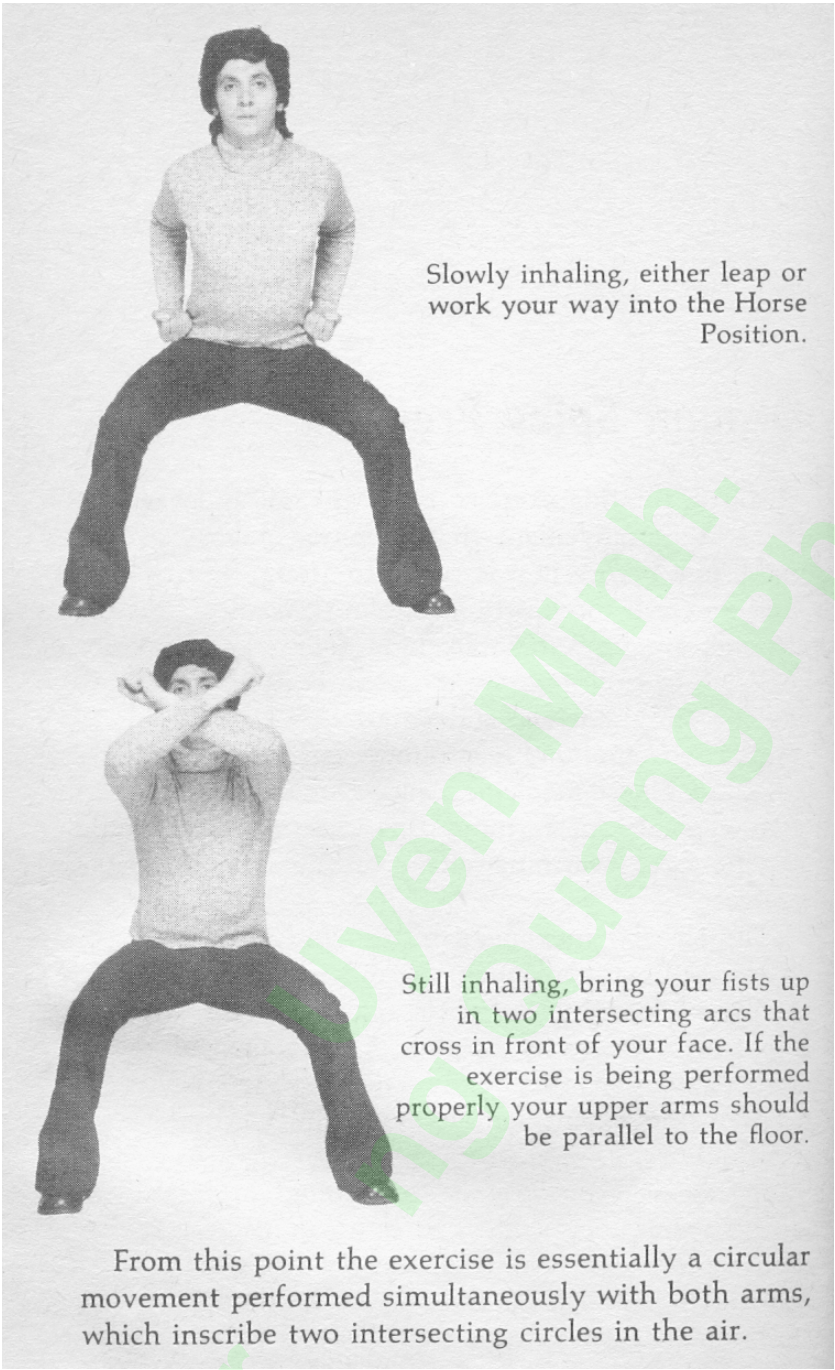
## Dragon Spies Prey

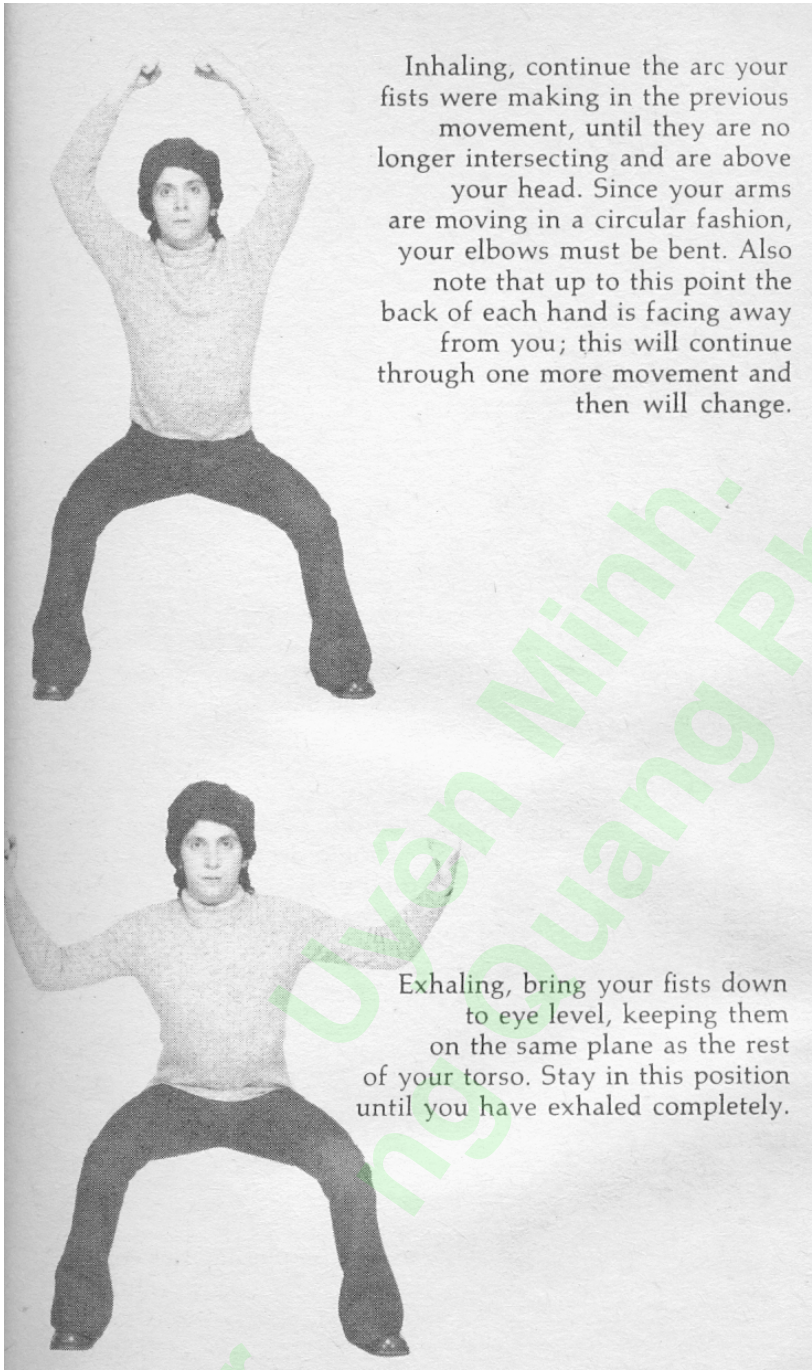
The title for this exercise is an apt one indeed. It is the sort of movement that an enraged beast would make just before it was ready to attack. Watching a man perform these actions is almost comical, but the benefits are unmistakable. It is definitely a superior method for calling up inner strength. Both arms moving in simultaneous and interlocking circles, it is similar to another respiratory exercise commonly used in Chinese medicine, called Double Winds. After a few weeks performing this exercise you should experience a warming effect throughout the entire body.

The circular movement in this and other exercises is the optimal movement in much of Kung Fu. In Taoist philosophy the circle represents the supreme force. In exercise its purpose is to retain and gather and strengthen the bodily energy. Used in battle, circular movement is the most difficult defense to break through.

Its medical purpose is the strengthening of the entire respiratory system. It is an immediate energy boost for those who must get themselves up for a difficult physical task, and it is an excellent means of fighting cold winter winds.



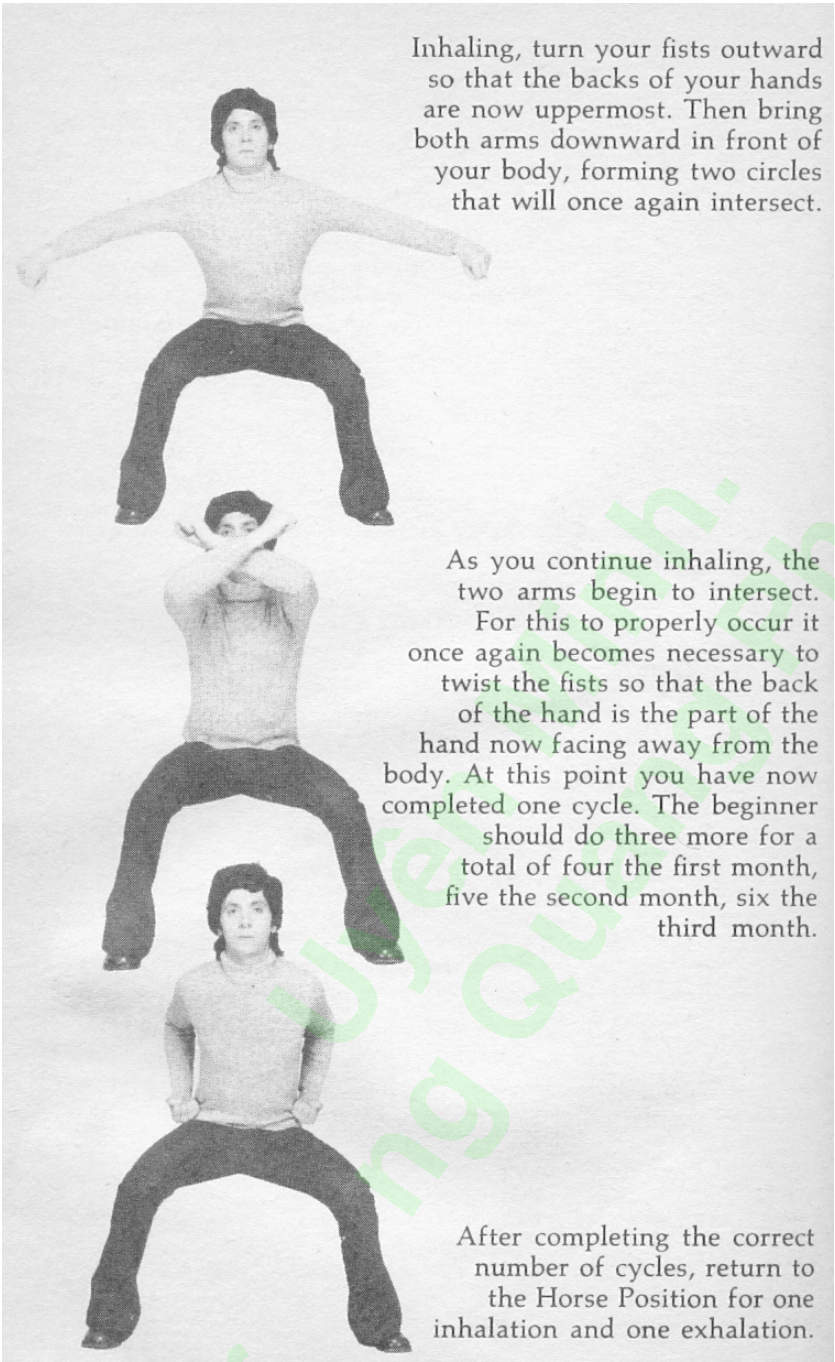




Inhaling, continue the arc your fists were making in the previous movement, until they are no longer intersecting and are above your head. Since your arms are moving in a circular fashion, your elbows must be bent. Also note that up to this point the back of each hand is facing away from you; this will continue through one more movement and then will change.

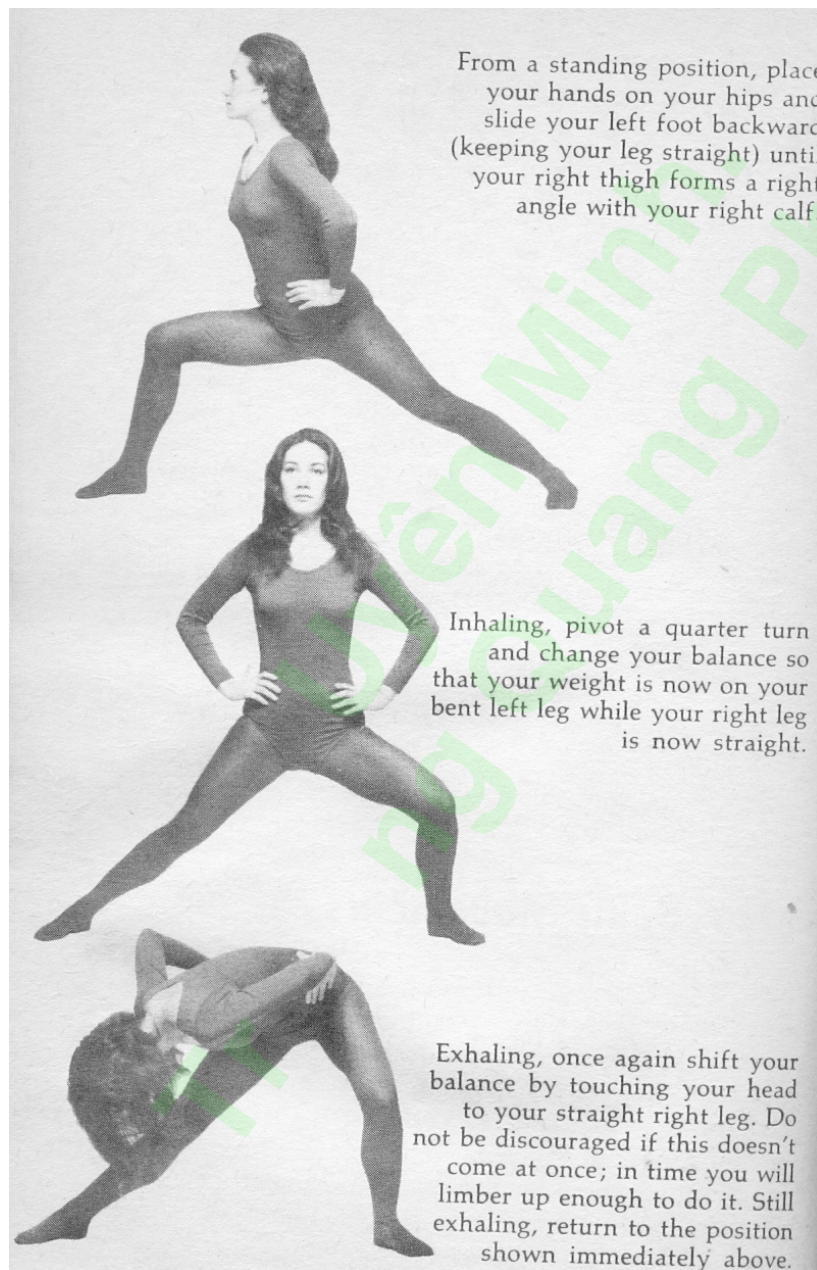
Exhaling, bring your fists down to eye level, keeping them on the same plane as the rest of your torso. Stay in this position until you have exhaled completely.

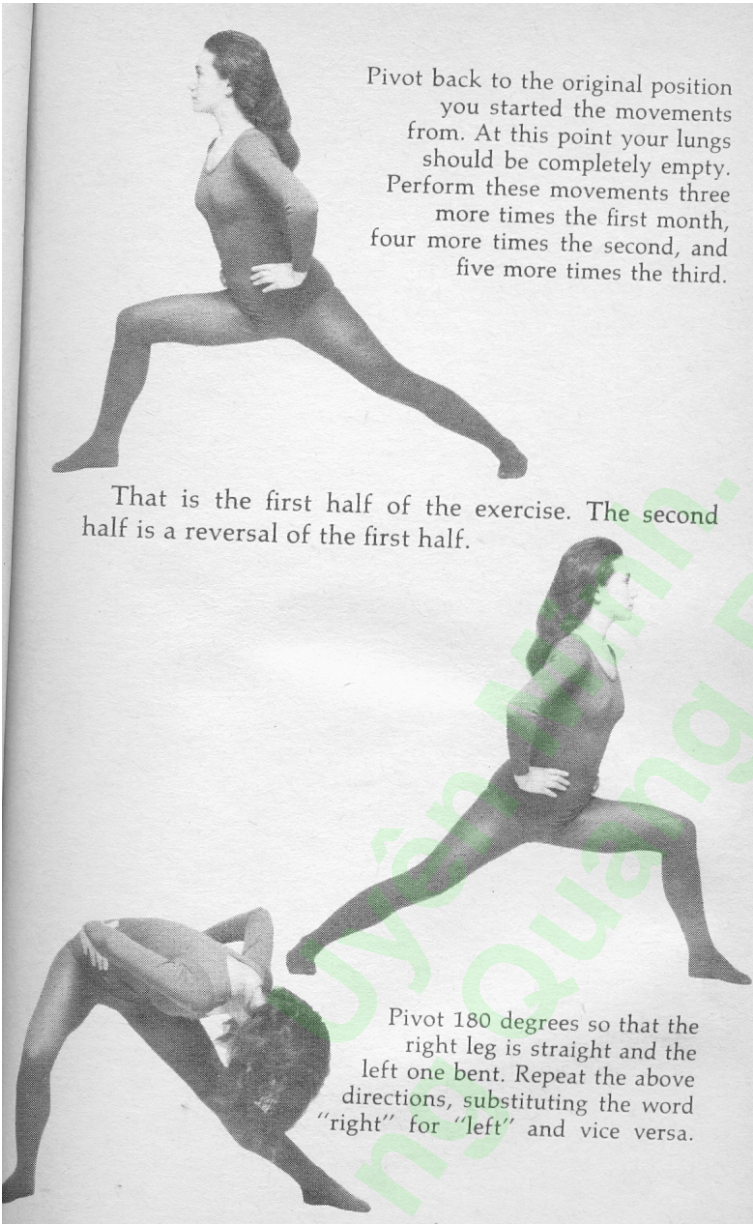




## Four Body Movements

Not to be confused with Four Arm Movements, this exercise tonifies the lower portions of the body, whereas the other exercise deals with the upper extremities. Basically a bending exercise, it affects the abdominal cavity and the spine. Particular emphasis is found on the stomach muscles, the digestive system, and the thoracic spinal-cord segments. Chinese medicine recommends it as a cure for stomach ailments, nausea, shortness of breath, and diarrhea.





## Crane Looks Behind

This exercise takes its name from the pivotal motions by which the exerciser ends up facing in the opposite direction from the one he faced when he started. Taught by the Tiger Claw School, the exercise has gained wide currency in other Kung Fu systems.

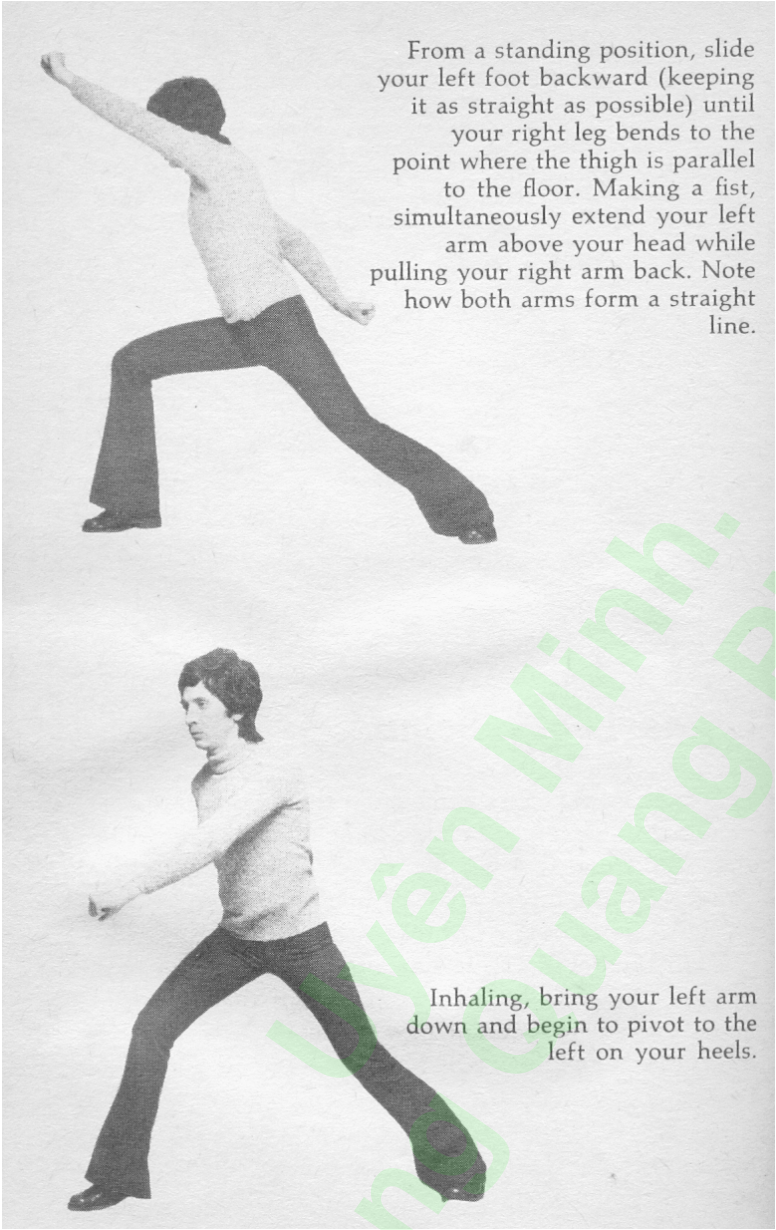
Unfortunately, this is one of those exercises that not very much is known about, except that it is frequently used to acquaint new students with some of the movements they will have to learn in Kung Fu two-man sparring exercises.

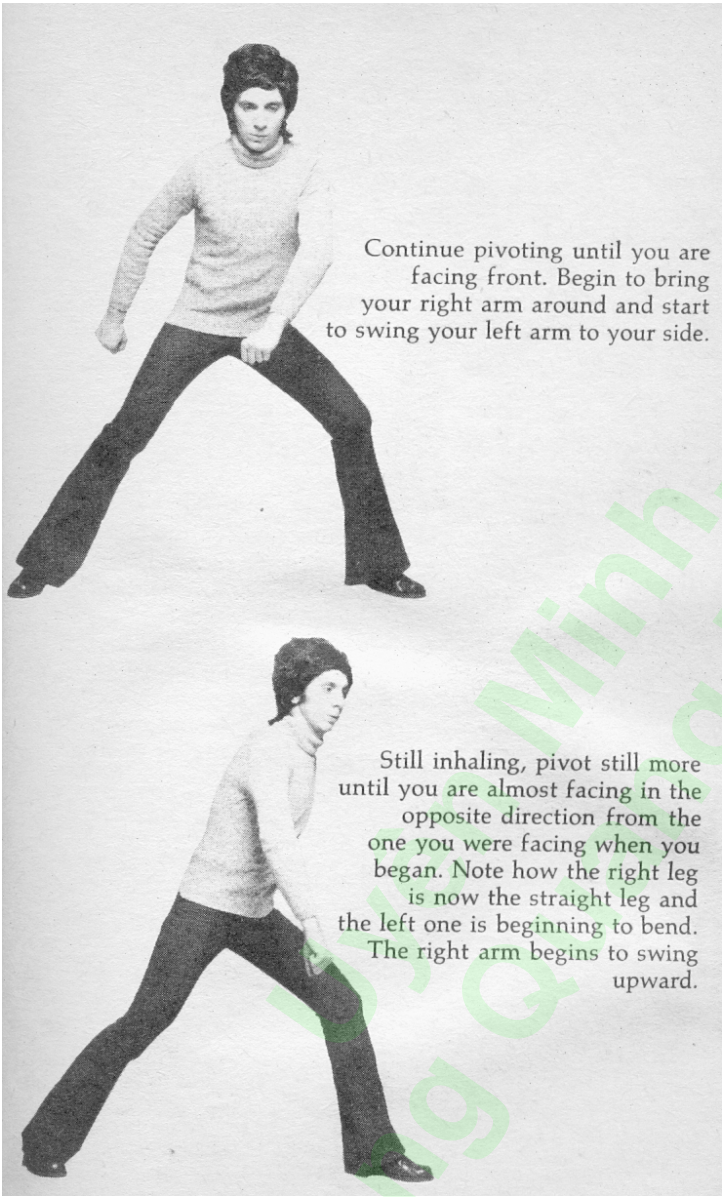
As for its benefits, it strengthens the hips, the knees, and the leg tendons, and is recommended for relief of rheumatism.

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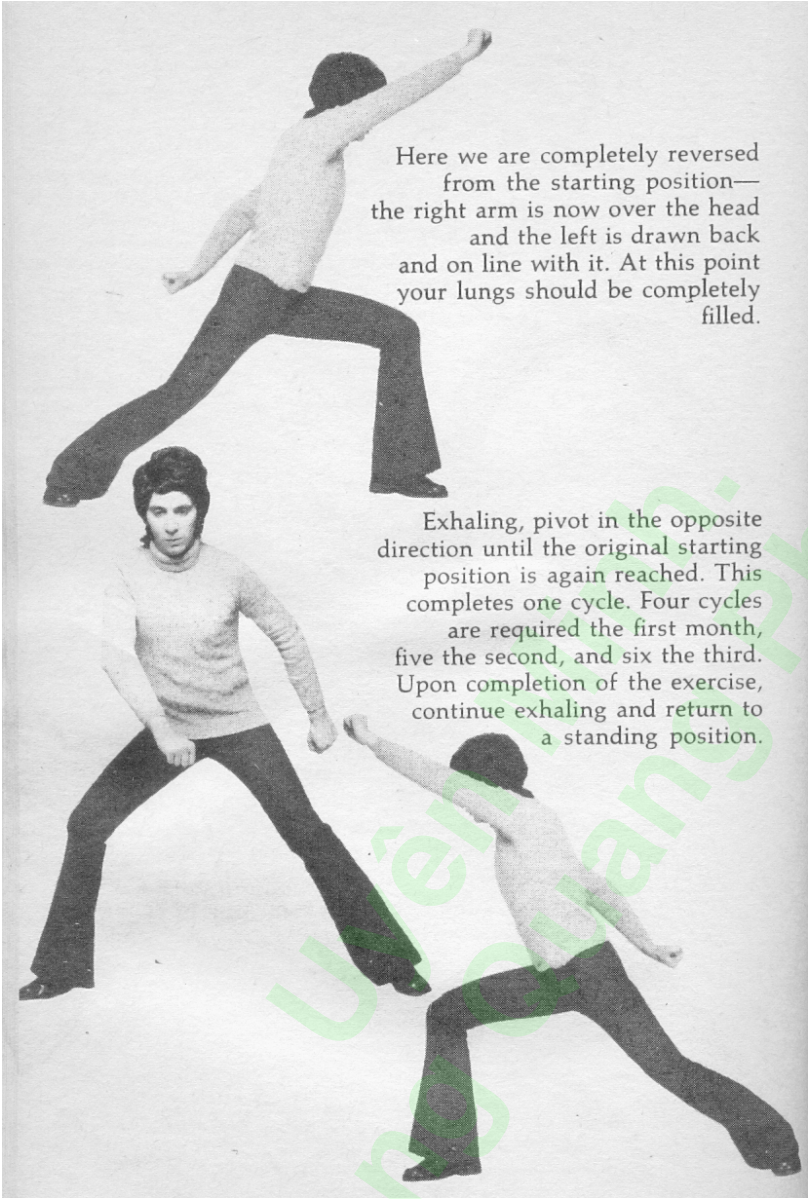






Continue pivoting until you are facing front. Begin to bring your right arm around and start to swing your left arm to your side.

Still inhaling, pivot still more until you are almost facing in the opposite direction from the one you were facing when you began. Note how the right leg is now the straight leg and the left one is beginning to bend. The right arm begins to swing upward.



## Tiger Stretches Its Back

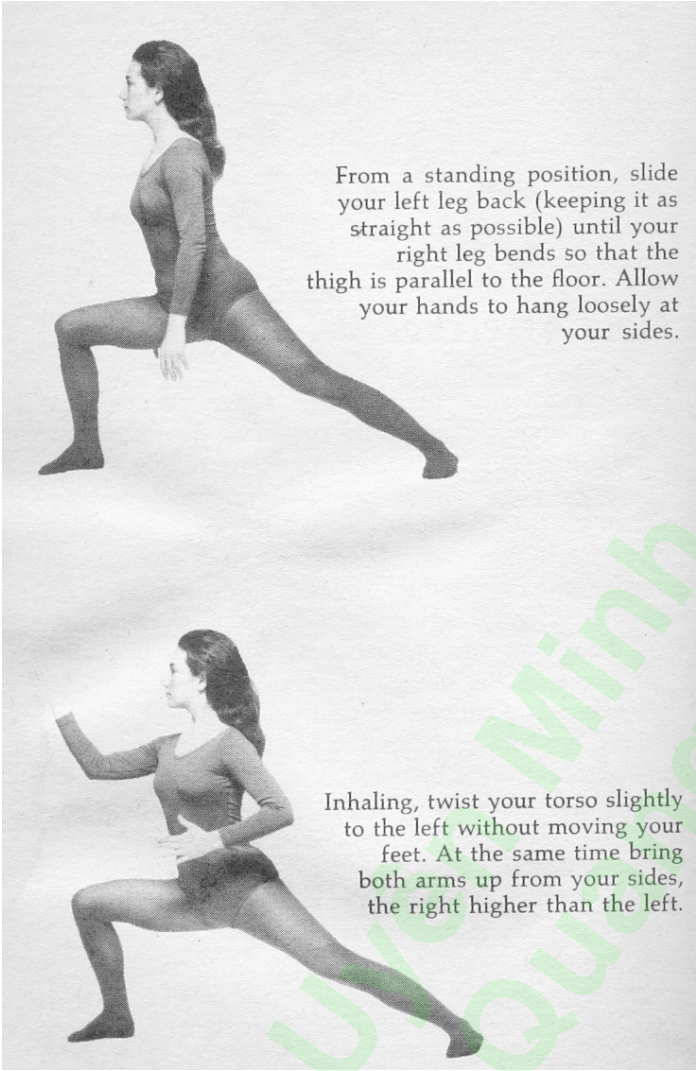
This exercise is a difficult stretching manoeuvre that brings the entire spine into play, but in a different manner than any of the previous exercises that stimulated the spinal column. Essentially, it bends it at an odd angle, the likes of which no other exercise system in the world duplicates. The overall effect is a general and intense tonification of the entire sympathetic nervous and parasympathetic nervous systems. A few months of such spinal stimulation has an excellent effect on the brain and spinal cord, and affects mental states positively. Since the nerves in the spinal column are attached to most of the internal organs, the entire organism benefits.

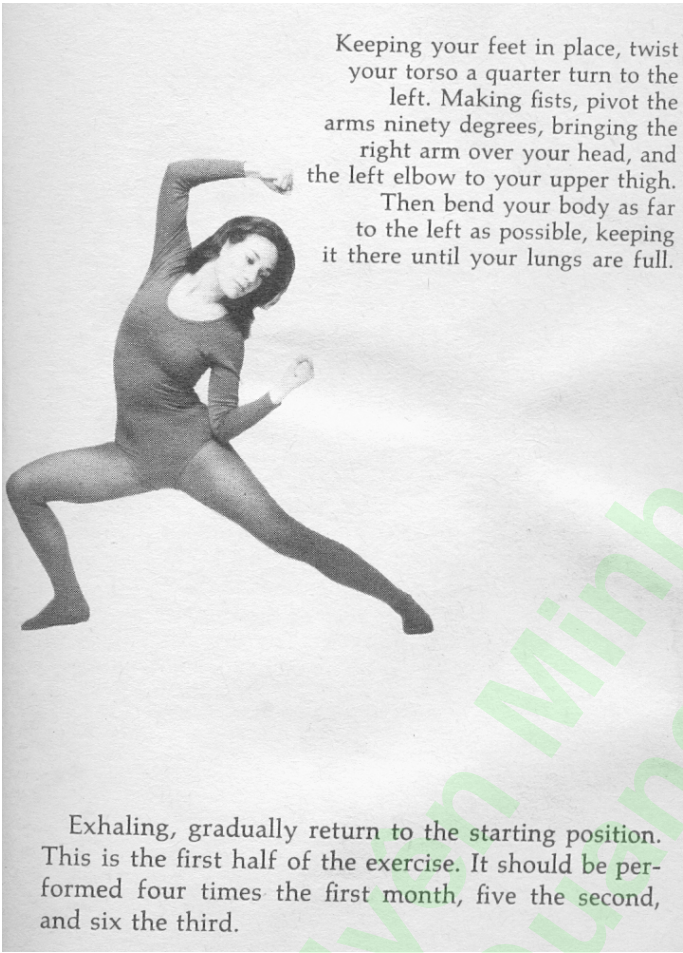
The arm movements in this exercise also help enlarge the chest cavity in much the same way as Two Hands Push the Sky. This is a very vital function, as the increased stimulation will cause the internal organs to grow more and this exercise provides them with the room in which to expand.

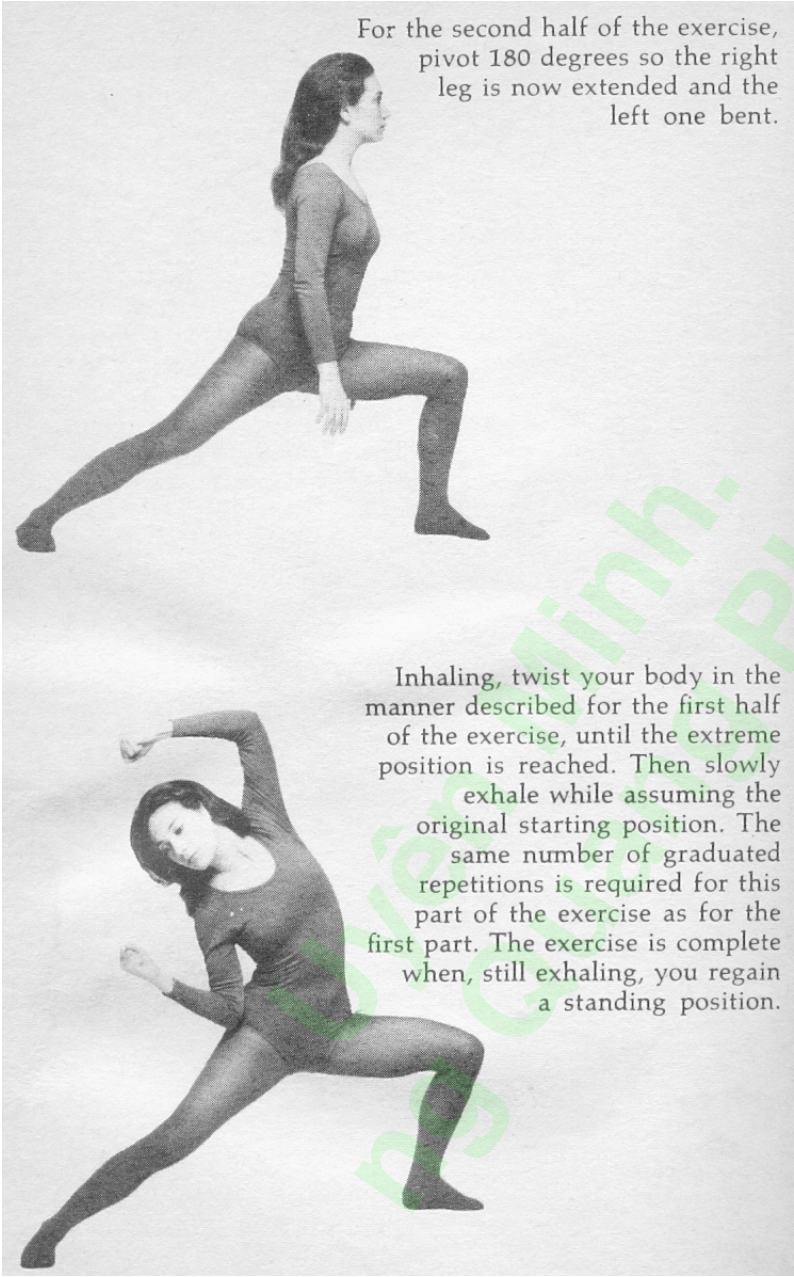
Finally, it is used in Chinese medicine as a remedy for back problems, stiffness of joints, headaches, and mental depression.











## Leopard Reveals Claws

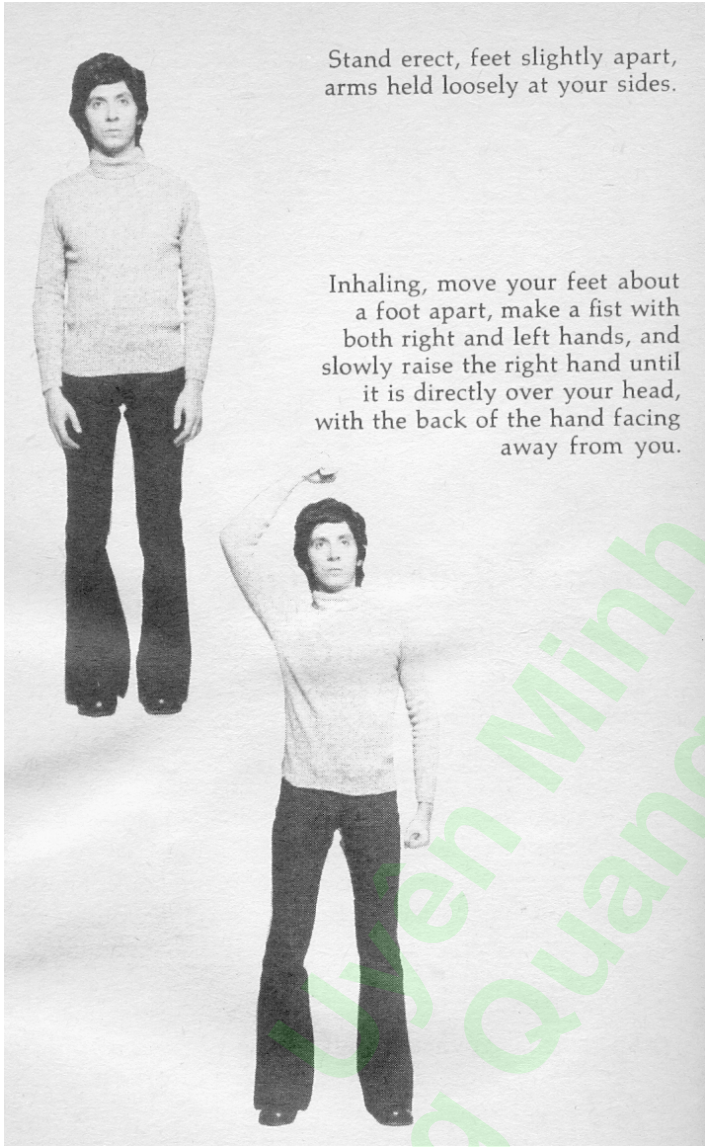
Without a doubt, this exercise is the trickiest one to learn from a book. It is the only exercise of the lot that combines arm movement's with high leg movements. Moreover, they must be performed in a very precise fashion. The effect from a distance is not dissimilar from that of a puppet on a string being pulled in opposing directions. Naturally, it is not easy to do, which is why it is the last exercise in the book. However, if you have been gradually working your way through all the preceding exercises this one shouldn't present too much of a problem.

Leopard Reveals Claws, as its title indicates, has a strong martial application. It is one of the stepping off points for more advanced Kung Fu forms which are all martial in application.

The goal of the exercise is an overall toughening of the body, with particular emphasis on sinews, leg muscles, stomach muscles, and abdominal organs.

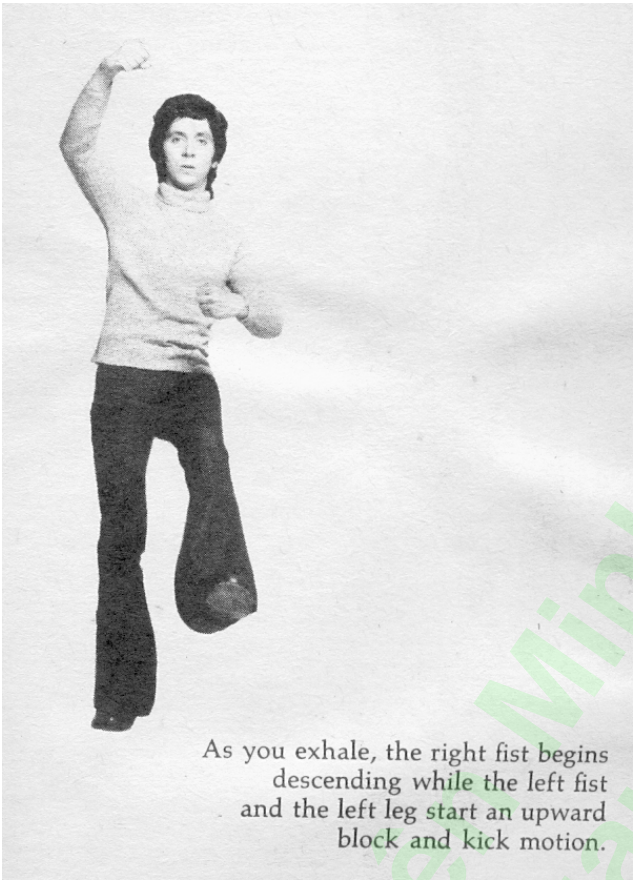






Stand erect, feet slightly apart,  
arms held loosely at your sides.

Inhaling, move your feet about  
a foot apart, make a fist with  
both right and left hands, and  
slowly raise the right hand until  
it is directly over your head,  
with the back of the hand facing  
away from you.



As you exhale, the right fist begins descending while the left fist and the left leg start an upward block and kick motion.

